

University of Strathclyde
Department of Educational Studies

**Facilitating Lifelong Learning:
Adult Basic Education Tutors in the Republic of Ireland.**

Anthony Burke

In part fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Education

2003

The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.49. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in or derived, from this thesis.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the result of many years of effort and would not have been possible without the assistance of a great many people.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Professor John Halliday, for the excellent guidance and support he has provided throughout the course of this work. His sound advice and encouragement were essential for completion of this dissertation, and is highly appreciated.

I am deeply grateful to Ed.D course co-ordinator Molly Cumming, for always taking time out to answer my never-ending stream of emails and for providing much needed assistance and support. Her amazing energy and enthusiasm were instrumental in keeping me motivated and focussed.

I would like to thank my brother and fellow student Eamonn for his help and camaraderie over the last number of years. He is the primary reason why I embarked on the Ed.D course and is therefore responsible for me getting this degree and for the numerous enjoyable weekends spent in Glasgow while attending tutorials. The fact that we both studied together certainly enriched the experience.

I also wish to express my appreciation to my girlfriend Niamh for her support, patience and motivation. Special thanks to my sisters Anne Marie and Sarah, my friends and colleagues for their patience and friendship during this research. I am particularly grateful to Margaret O'Leary for introducing me to Adult Basic Education and inspiring me to research this topic.

I would like to especially acknowledge and thank all tutors who completed and returned questionnaires, Adult Literacy Organisers who distributed, collected and returned the questionnaires to me and the interviewees for being so generous with their time and with the information they gave me.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents, Anna and Ned, who instilled in me the value of education and encouraged me to always strive for the best. For all this and much more, I dedicate this dissertation to them.

CONTENTS

	Abstract	xi
1	Introduction	1
	1.1 Introduction	1
	1.2 Context	1
	1.3 Organisation of Adult Literacy Service	6
	1.3.1 Adult Literacy Organisers	7
	1.3.2 Adult Literacy Tutors	8
	1.3.3 National Adult Literacy Agency	9
	1.4 Outline of Study	10
	1.4.1 Aims and Objectives	12
	1.4.2 Research Questions	12
2	Adults Learning	14
	2.1 Introduction	14
	2.2 Adult Education	14
	2.3 Historical Evolution of Adult Education in Ireland	17
	2.3.1 Phase One: 1922 – 1969.	17
	2.3.2 Phase Two: 1969 - 1988.	18
	2.3.3 Phase Three: 1989 To Present	20
	2.4 Post-Compulsory Education in Ireland	24

2.4.1	Liberal Adult Learning	24
2.4.2	Social Adult Learning	25
2.4.3	Vocational Adult Learning	25
2.4.4	Certification Adult Learning	26
2.4.5	Interventionist Adult Learning	26
2.5.	Further Education in Ireland	29
2.6.	Training Courses for Trainers in the Further Education Sector	32
2.6.1	National Policy on Training Educators	32
2.7	Some Further Issues in Further Education in Ireland	34
3	Lifelong Learning	35
3.1	Introduction	35
3.2	Learning and Lifelong Learning	35
3.3	Lifelong Learning and Adult Literacy	44
3.4	Lifelong Educators?	50
4	Adult Literacy - the national context	57
4.1	Introduction	57
4.2	Brief overview of adult literacy in Ireland	57
4.2.1	'Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education (2000)'	59
4.3	Causes and Effects	61

4.4	Adult Basic Education	61
4.4.1	Literacy	62
4.4.2	Numeracy	65
4.4.3	Basic Education and the Workforce	67
4.4.4	Responses to the Problem	71
4.5	The Irish Perspective	76
4.6	The Adult Basic Education Workforce	82
5	Methodology	89
5.1.	Introduction	89
5.2.	Approaches and Methods	89
5.2.1	Literature Review	90
5.2.2	Survey of Literacy Practitioners	91
5.2.3	Questionnaire Design	93
5.2.4	Quantitative and Qualitative Research Instruments	95
5.2.5	Data Triangulation	96
5.2.6	Interviews	97
5.2.7	Data analysis procedures	99
5.2.8	Presentation of Results	100
5.2.9	Ethical Considerations	101
6	Profile of the Adult Literacy Service	103
6.1.	Introduction	103

6.2	Findings and Discussion	103
6.3.	Status of Employment of Tutors	104
	Table 6.3.1 Status of Employment of Tutors	105
	Chart 6.3.1 Status of Employment of Tutors	105
6.4.	Gender and Age	108
	Table 6.4.1 Gender of Survey Respondents	110
	Table 6.4.2 Age Distribution of Survey Respondents	110
6.5.	Tuition Experience of Tutors	112
	Chart 6.5.1 Tuition Experience of Tutors	112
	Table 6.5.1 Tuition Experience of Tutors	112
6.6.	Type of Tuition Provided	114
	Chart 6.6.1 Type of Tuition Provided	115
	Table 6.6.1 Type of Tuition Provided	115
6.7.	Pre-Service Training	116
	Chart 6.7.1 Pre-Service Training	118
	Table 6.7.1 Received Pre-Service Training	119
	Table 6.7.2 Satisfied with Pre-Service Training	119
6.8.	Inservice Training	125
	Table 6.8.1 Inservice Training	125
	Table 6.8.2 Tutors Attending Inservice	127
6.9	Accredited Tutor Training	132
	Table 6.9.1 Support for Accredited Tutor Training	135
	Table 6.9.2 Interest in Accredited Tutor Training	135
6.10.	Educational Qualifications of Tutors	139

Table 6.10.1	Educational Qualifications of Tutors	140
Table 6.10.2	Teaching Qualifications of Tutors	140
6.11.	Motivations for Tutoring	141
Table 6.11.1	Motivations for Tutoring	142
6.12.	Benefits/Satisfactions of Tutoring	146
Table 6.12.1	Benefits/Satisfactions of Tutoring	149
6.13.	Frustrations of Tutoring	150
Table 6.13.1	Frustrations of Tutoring	152
6.14.	Benefits Experienced By Learners	152
Table 6.14.1	Benefits Experienced By Learners	160
6.15.	Occupation of Tutors	161
Table 6.15.1	Occupation of Tutors	161
6.16.	Prior Experience	162
Table 6.16.1	Prior Experience	163
6.17.	Interest in Increasing Tutoring Hours	164
Table 6.17.1	Interest in Increasing Tutoring Hours	164
6.18.	Providing Other Help for Students	165
Table 6.18.1	Providing Other Help for Students	165
6.19.	Improvements on scheme	167
Table 6.19.1	Improvements on scheme	168
6.20.	Other Issues That Emerged	169
6.21.	Conclusion	172

7	Conclusions and Recommendations	173
7.1.	Introduction	173
7.2.	Training Needs of ABE Tutors	174
7.3.	Valuing the ABE Workforce	181
7.4.	Focus of ABE Sector	182
7.5.	Research and Development	185
7.6.	Main Research Findings	187
7.7	Conclusion	190
	Bibliography	191
	Appendices	212
Appendix One	Tutor Questionnaire	212
Appendix Two	Interview Schedule	217
Appendix Three	Sample Quotes File From Surveys	218
Appendix Four	Partial Interview Transcript	262

Abstract

This dissertation explores adult basic education in the Republic of Ireland. ABE is seen to be closely related to international interest in the notion of lifelong learning. The literature surrounding this notion is reviewed in detail in order to outline a conception of ABE that is both appropriate to the Irish context and wider international concern. Recent developments have led to increased Government funding, recognition and a commitment under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 to expand the ABE service within the Republic. It is argued however that this plan is not entirely coherent and that there is a dearth of research about and within the service. This dissertation aims to outline the extent of that incoherence and to go some way towards remedying the purported dearth.

The first research element of the dissertation is a survey of ABE practitioners and follow up interviews. This highlights priority issues for the service and provides an overview of the way the service is currently and could in the future be organised. The second element concerns government policy towards ABE. There appears to be a shift in focus from a holistic approach to a more economic one.

From what is discovered from the survey, interviews, literature review and policy critique an attempt is made to make recommendations for future development and future areas of research in the Irish context.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by presenting a brief background to the research concern addressed in this dissertation. These discussions form the basis for identifying the outlined research problem. The aims and objectives of this study, in addition to the research questions posed, will be clearly stated. Finally, an outline of the dissertation structure describing the contents of the remaining chapters is given.

1.2 Context

In 1997 the level of literacy difficulties in Ireland was highlighted with the publication of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) figures which found that 25% of the adult population were ‘functioning at a very basic level of comprehension in the ordinary reading and writing situations which arise, in the community and at work’ (O’Sullivan, 1999, pg.8) therefore ‘making it difficult for them to cope with the rising skill demands of the information age’ (RTE, 2000, June 14).

The IALS survey (OECD, 1997) further highlighted that adults in Ireland with low literacy skills were twice as likely to be unemployed than adults with medium to high skills, serving as a strong indicator of the extent to which low literacy levels may effectively inhibit individuals from full participation in society. The IALS results

indicated average literacy levels well below the expectations of literacy practitioners. The publication of the results gave added weight to the lobbying efforts of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), and adult literacy moved quickly up the list of educational priorities (NALA, 2002, pg.1). It resulted in a renewed emphasis and a commitment both to literacy and to adult education, as outlined in the White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000). The annual literacy budget has been increased by a factor of 18 since 1997 to reach 17.9 million in 2003 (DeValera, 2003, February 1), and significant investment in literacy is provided for in the National Development Plan 2000-2006 (DES, 2000).

The Adult Literacy Service has expanded rapidly and there are now almost 23,000 people attending literacy classes in 126 schemes operated by the Vocational Education Committees (VEC's) and funded by the Department of Education and Science (DES, 2002). This compares to 15,000 people attending classes in 2001 (NALA, 2002). It is anticipated by both the Department of Education and NALA that these numbers will increase during the coming years (DeValera, 2003, February 1; NALA, 2002).

Literacy advocates have used the IALS results to position literacy as being capable of addressing a wide range of social and economic issues as a way of leveraging funding and since the publication of the IALS results the Irish government has begun to take literacy seriously (NALA, 2002). Despite the best efforts of literacy advocates to publicise that fact and their continual striving to remove barriers to participation, there is a significant gap between the number of people considered to need skill

upgrading and those who actually take part in basic education classes. DeValera (2003, February 1) states that 'while participation on adult literacy schemes has increased dramatically in recent years, we know that the challenge is broader than that - no country has ever succeeded in attracting more than 5-10% of those in need through conventional adult literacy schemes'.

The VEC Literacy Service has been the primary provider of literacy tuition in Ireland since the late 1970s. The service emerged as a voluntary response to an identified need within the community for literacy support. The service has been operating in a voluntary capacity until as recently as 1995, but has since been funded by the Department of Education and Science. Although the service had been operating on the assumption that approximately 5 per cent of the adult population required literacy supports, the service was expanded to meet the literacy needs of a substantially higher proportion of the population as identified in IALS (OECD, 1997). The IALS results have led to an examination of the services and opportunities offered to adults with literacy difficulties, with NALA highlighting that 'two hours of tuition per week was too short a time to make significant progress' while also emphasising that 'the voluntary nature of schemes makes it difficult to increase tuition time' (McDonogh, 1999, pg.3).

'Basic levels of literacy and numeracy are an indispensable prerequisite for independent living, for access to education and training and for effective participation in society' (DES, 1995, pg.78). Individuals without these basic levels are denied the opportunity to fully participate in society. The importance of an

effective Adult Literacy Programme cannot be underestimated, either in terms of improving the life chances of participants on adult literacy courses or in terms of building and developing a skilled workforce.

The OECD Economic Survey of Ireland also highlighted low literacy levels as a 'major bottleneck' in Ireland's current economic success story, noting that 'there is still too little adult education and training, especially for the unemployed' (OECD, 1999) which effectively inhibits individuals from full participation in society. With the pressure to up skill the Irish workforce there is increasing pressure to accredit courses in order to improve the employment chances of participants in literacy tuition and adult education. However, NALA also recommend that learning which is not certified should be equally valued and resourced. Although literacy is important in improving an individual's access to the labour force, there are a huge range of benefits to an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem that should not be underestimated in measuring the progress of participants in literacy tuition.

According to the IALS (OECD, 1995) there is little difference in self-rating between those with high and low literacy skills (pp. 171-183). Clearly many individuals with lower literacy skills do not see themselves as having a literacy problem. Ironically, those with higher literacy skills are more likely to participate in adult education activities (pp.144-146). This is exactly the opposite of what would be needed to redress inequities in literacy levels. This suggests that within their work and social context, many people have the literacy or decoding skills that meet their needs (Barton & Hamilton, 2000), whether or not they meet the minimum level set by the

OECD and national governments. An understanding of how literacy is contextualised in the lives of the people is essential if effective literacy policy is to be developed.

Adult learners often have difficulty finding work and this suggests that issues beyond mere technical skills of reading and writing figure in successful job searches. Many authors have questioned the claims that are made about education leading to jobs (Hull, 1997; Toll, 2001). Furthermore, individuals who complete adult upgrading programmes may have difficulty retaining the skills learned if they do not live in a community or personal context that encourages reading. In today's economy there is no guarantee, perhaps even little chance, of getting employment for those who improve their skill level (Livingstone, 1998).

Widespread commentary on the issue indicates the 'problem' is not simply one of improving the quality or length of compulsory schooling, as literacy and numeracy capacity on leaving school is only one indicator of continued competence throughout the lifespan (Castleton and McDonald, 2002; Mezirow, 1991; Scribner 1984; Copley and Knapper, 1983). While some researchers question the transfer of school literacies to the workplace others argue that contemporary work and citizenship demands create new forms of literacy and numeracy practice (Johnston, 1998). Therefore ongoing literacy and numeracy competence is best conceptualised under a model of 'lifelong learning', with the requirement for support in terms of policies that address whole of life education, rather than schools based policy initiatives alone (Castleton and McDonald, 2002).

As stated in the White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000, pg. 30) ‘this White Paper marks the adoption for the first time of a commitment to lifelong learning as the governing principle of Irish education policy’. However, Eurydice, the Information Network on Education in Europe, (2000, pg.79) points out that ‘in identifying priorities for lifelong learning, the National Employment Action Plan for Ireland 1999 contextualised the elements of a lifelong learning strategy within the Employment and Labour Market Committee definition: ‘all purposeful learning activity, whether formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence’’. This highlights the Irish government emphasis on the economic benefits of lifelong learning.

There is currently an increased government commitment to improving literacy levels in Ireland and funding has subsequently become available to address literacy issues in a comprehensive manner. This has led to the literacy service and the various literacy providers to expand their services to provide a wider range of tuition options and to substantially increase the number of people availing of literacy tuition. However, rather than merely expanding the service on an adhoc basis there appears to be a case for providers to take stock of recent developments in the service and in literacy generally prior to developing and expanding the service.

1.3. Organisation of Adult Literacy Service

The Adult Literacy Service delivers a range of programmes nationwide through literacy schemes operated by the 33 VEC’s. Funding is provided from the Adult

Literacy and Community Education budget of the Department of Education and Science. There are currently 126 literacy schemes, with many VEC's operating several schemes to meet the scale and geographic spread of demand in their areas. While the general structure and funding of schemes is standardised, operational guidelines are loose and there appears to be considerable variation between VEC's in the management of the schemes (NALA, 2002, pg.5).

1.3.1 Adult Literacy Organisers

Schemes are managed by Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs) who report to the Adult Education Organisers in the VEC's. There are currently 141 ALOs, of whom 61 work on a full-time basis and 80 are part-time (DES, 2002). The main functions of ALOs are 'to:

- plan, develop, manage and administer their literacy scheme (in conjunction with the Adult Education Officer)
- recruit and train voluntary tutors
- recruit and assess students and match them with tutors
- promote the literacy service and their scheme.' (NALA, 2002, pg.6)

The role of the ALO has changed significantly over the years as a result of the rapid growth and development of the Literacy Service. This growth has placed increasing emphasis on the managerial and administrative function of ALOs and has reduced their direct involvement in tuition (NALA, 2002, pg.6).

1.3.2 Adult Literacy Tutors

Literacy tutors are divided into two groups - voluntary and paid tutors. There are currently 5386 tutors working in literacy schemes around the country, 4136 of whom are volunteers, 1193 part-time paid and 57 full-time paid. (DES, 2002) The total amount of tuition provided is 14,000 hours per week (NALA, 2003). Each volunteer delivers a limited number of hours of tuition per week, generally less than five. However, the combined input of the body of volunteers is about 10,000 hours of tuition per week, which adds up to an annual saving of about €8.9m for the State (NALA, 2002).

Volunteers provide about 85% of the total volume of literacy tuition and work on a one-to-one basis with their students. The concept of voluntary tutors working in their own communities is fundamental to the ethos of the Literacy Service, as it has developed to date. Paid tutors normally work with groups and 73.1 % of all learners are in groups (DES, 2002). There has been a vast increase in tutor and student numbers since 1997 when there was 'around 2,500 volunteers contributing to the service'. (Bailey, 1999, pg.16). This vast expansion of the service is further highlighted by DeValera (2003) when she points out that the current number of tutors (both paid and voluntary) equals the number of clients the service had in 1997.

This growth of the Adult Literacy Service has given rise to greater training needs among adult literacy practitioners - the Adult Literacy Organisers and literacy tutors (NALA, 2002, pg.1). These needs arise from the growing scale of the service and

from anticipated developments in the scope of the service. NALA (2002, pg.1) also states that ‘since the quality of the Literacy Service is critically dependent on the quality of those responsible for its provision, the training of adult literacy practitioners is a priority for NALA’. The Report by the Scottish Executive (2001, pg. 36) supports this view when it states that the ‘development of a professional qualification in teaching adult literacy and numeracy and accredited options for staff involved in supporting, developing and managing programmes is required to create a high quality professional level of service delivery across all sectors’. As pointed out by Beder (1991, pg.135) ‘if adult literacy is worth doing, it is worth doing well. This requires a well trained, well paid, professional workforce’.

1.3.3 National Adult Literacy Agency

Finally, the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is the co-ordinating, training and campaigning body for all those interested and involved in adult literacy work in Ireland. It is a membership organisation, but it receives most of its funding from the Department of Education and Science. NALA states its aims as being ‘to:

- raise public awareness about literacy issues
- secure adequate resources for adult literacy work
- develop and support high quality adult literacy provision’ (NALA, 1998, pg.7)

A key part of NALA's work is the development and organisation of in-service training programmes for literacy practitioners. Its budget for training has expanded significantly in recent years to provide for greatly increased provision of training.

The National Adult Learning Council (NALC) will complement NALA's work in future. NALC's remit covers the entire adult education sector, including literacy. It will have an overall promotion, co-ordinating and advisory role, including the funding and monitoring of programmes and staff development initiatives, advising on quality standards and dissemination of good practice (NALA, 2002, pg.7)

1.4 Outline of Study

NALA (1998) have stated that there is a 'dearth of research in this area' which is 'symptomatic of the lack of resources available' to this sphere of education in Ireland. This indicates that there is much uncharted territory in the area of adult basic education in Ireland.

Tutors in adult basic education have rarely been surveyed. NALA (2002) surveyed tutors as part of an analysis of training needs. During the course of this research it emerged that some VEC's have surveyed tutors locally in order to inform their strategic plans. However, these have generally not been on a large scale basis. It is imperative to find out whom the providers of this primarily voluntary service are, what motivates them and why they continue to tutor. The training received by participants would also provide useful data given the aforementioned debate

regarding teacher quality. The experience of tutors can also provide a detailed picture of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of this sector. This will assist in highlighting priority issues for the service.

This study is intended to outline current concerns of the group of ABE tutors who participated in the research process. Ideally, this research will result in a general contribution to the sphere of adult basic education in Ireland.

This research has several components. The Literature Review is examined in chapters two, three and four. Chapter Two begins with an exploration of the whole area of Adults Learning and Adult / Further Education in general, of which ABE is part. Chapter Three focuses on Lifelong Learning in both a national and an international context. Literacy and numeracy competence is seen by the Irish government as being critical to the notion of lifelong learning which has been adopted as the governing principle of Irish education policy (DES, 2000) Chapter Four completes the literature review with an examination of literature on Adult Basic Education from Ireland and elsewhere in order to provide a clear picture of the concepts and issues involved.

Chapter Five outlines the methodology and data collection process, and gives some background information about the population studied. In Chapter Six, the results of the research process are presented. The themes in the literature are applied to the primary interview and survey data in order to 'test' some of the assertions in the literature against the experiences of the respondents studied. Points of disjuncture, as

well as some recurrent commonalities are identified. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes with some evaluation of how well this study succeeded in profiling the Adult Literacy Service in the Republic of Ireland. The themes and central questions raised in the dissertation are reiterated; an attempt is made to make recommendations for future development and future areas of research in the Irish context.

1.4.1 Aims and Objectives

The main aims of this research are:

- To survey ABE practitioners and conduct follow up interviews in order to highlight priority issues for the service and provide an overview of the way the service is currently and could in the future be organised.
- To examine government policy towards ABE.
- To review relevant literature on ABE, Adult/Further Education and Lifelong Learning.
- To examine the development of ABE in the Irish context.
- To make recommendations for future development and future areas of research in the Irish context.

1.4.2 Research Questions

The main research questions that I intend to address in this study are:

- What is the profile of currently serving ABE tutors: age, sex, educational background, etc?
- How is the ABE service organised? What are priority issues for future development and future research within the service?
- Has Irish government policy on Lifelong Learning caused a shift in the focus of the ABE service from a holistic approach to a more economic one?

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a brief background to the area of adult basic education in the Republic of Ireland. This background forms the basis for identifying the outlined research questions. An outline of the dissertation structure describing the contents of the remaining chapters is given.

Chapter Two

Adults Learning

2.1 **Introduction**

This chapter presents relevant research on adult education, both nationally and internationally. The historical evolution of adult education in the Republic of Ireland is traced so as to provide the reader with a greater understanding of the context. The areas of post compulsory and further education are explored. Government policy on adult education is introduced and discussed.

2.2 **Adult Education**

Adult education and training is an important and developing field of activity and study. Basset et al (1989) argue that 'adult education plays an integral part in our social, cultural and economic development. It is central to the maintenance and development of a mature democratic society. It provides an opportunity for people to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills and through improved cooperation and communication to create a better community, society and environment in which to live' (pg.7). Bane (1996) states that 'adult education has now become an agent of change and is at the forefront in many areas, both urban and rural, in the attempt to counter disadvantage whether educational, social or economic' (pg.7). This highlights the change in perception of adult and continuing education, which was for many years viewed as little more than the provision of courses of a hobby or recreational

nature for people with time on their hands! The Report on the National Education Convention (Coolahan, 1994, pg.104) highlighted the need to ensure that adult education becomes more 'centre stage' and mainstream with increased government funding and support. It is recognised that adult learning, which for many years was regarded as the Cinderella area of education, must now have a dominant role in our changing society.

Sargant (1996, pg.196) points out that a number of key researchers have made it clear that 'adult learning is not confined within conventional institutions or conveyed only by qualified teachers'. She goes so far as to say that 'the learning that goes on in public places, whether it is described as education, training or development is only the tip of the iceberg' (pg.196). Adult learning takes place in many different forms and places. These include:

- Publicly funded formal education and training e.g. Further education and higher education in universities and other third level institutions. Formal adult education is also aimed at giving adults a chance of making up for deficiencies in their previous schooling and of qualifying for further studies, for vocational education and for employment (Abrahamsson, 1996, pg.169).
- Private education and training organisations e.g. secretarial schools, correspondence colleges. Training specifically for the labour market is an important element of this, as is in-service training and retraining. It is seen as a measure for the prevention and solution of unemployment problems.
- Learning also takes place in the home, workplace, local community centre and the local sports complex. Many term this as non-formal learning (or

popular education). Abrahamsson (1996) believes that this form of learning is very important as it reaches 'those who would otherwise not go in for education activities' (pg.173). While this form of education confers skills and knowledge to participants, many consider its real strength lies in the increased self-confidence it gives to adult learners. It also increases their understanding and respect for other people's opinions. Therefore, it can be seen that this form of learning makes a significant contribution not only to the individual or groups participating but also to society as a whole.

Sargant (1996) observes that 'most adults interweave their learning with the rest of their lives, their work and their family and use some of their leisure time... frequently, leisure activities provide a bridge into active learning' (p.198) and many people learn from their leisure activities without realising the knowledge and skills they have gained. Gardening is a classic example of this. There is also a need for a generous range and variety of provision to be maintained, without unreasonable financial stress on participants, as the social and demographic trends of increased early retirement, unemployment and active old age are very much likely to increase need and demand of such provision. As education of adults is a goal of social and economic policy we must 'return to a more generous notion of the relevance and scope of adult learning if we are to provide for the needs of adults throughout their lives [and]...to meet the national training and education targets' (Sargant, 1996, pg.209).

2.3.

Historical Evolution of Adult Education in Ireland

The Department of Education (DES, 1998, pg.35) traced the development of adult education in Ireland into 'three phases and two evolutionary streams'. Phase one took place from the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 until 1969 when the first Committee on Adult Education, which marked the beginning of the second phase, was established. The third phase began with the advent of the introduction of second chance education in this country. Unlike the other sectors of education there have been two distinct strands involved in adult learning throughout its evolution - the statutory sector and the voluntary sector.

2.3.1

Phase One: 1922 – 1969.

In the early years of the Irish Republic a number of statutory developments took place in the educational sphere. The Department of Education was established in 1924 and this in turn provided for a more centralised approach to education and training policymaking. In 1930 the Vocational Education Act established VEC's. These provide formal second-level education for young people in their catchment areas and were also required under the act to provide continuing and technical education. This Act also 'initiated the agencies which became the major statutory providers of education for adults in this period. The County Committees of Agriculture (1931) and later ACOT (1980) provided training for farmers and rural women. This training is now provided by TEAGASC' (Des, 1998, pg.36).

It is very clear, however, that the policy of this period was primarily focussed on increasing and widening access to those of obligatory school going age (specifically at post-primary level) rather than adults. There was a start of a sustained and long-term investment in education at this stage. Post compulsory certainly was not a priority for the government at this time. This made the contribution by the voluntary sector all the more crucial.

There were many voluntary organisations that were to play a very significant role in the shaping of the emerging state. Nationalist organisations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Gaelic League greatly assisted in revitalising the cultural and intellectual climate of the country.

2.3.2

Phase Two: 1969 - 1988.

In the 1960's there was a growing consensus on the relationship between increased economic growth and increased investment in education. The main concentration of this investment was once again diverted away from adult education into the other educational sectors..During this period, however, there were two significant advisory bodies on adult education policy: - the Committee on Adult Education (Murphy Report) (1969-1973) and the Kenny Commission on Adult Education (Lifelong Learning) (1984).

- **Committee on Adult Education:**

This Committee reported its findings and recommendations in late 1973. It was a very comprehensive document dealing with a number of different issues including a definition of adult education and an analysis of existing provision and participants. The report outlined many difficulties faced by the sector including a lack of structure, government funding and minimal cooperation between organisations in the field. The contribution of the voluntary sector was recognised. The report primarily recommended that the sphere of adult learning would be placed on a more statutory footing complete with clear administrative structures. The Committee suggested a 'framework consisting of thirty five County Education Committees, feeding into nine Regional Education Committees, with a 'special section' within the Department of Education at the apex of the proposed structure' (DES, 1998, pg.39). The report also recommended fifty fulltime adult education organisers and these were appointed in 1979 by the VEC's. Their main role was the identification and servicing of the learning needs of adults within their catchment areas. This development highlights the first clear professionalisation of adult education practitioners in Ireland. Economic difficulties due to the world oil crisis and the increase in the school population at second level meant that sufficient funds were not available to create a centralised adult education programme. The introduction of the community and comprehensive school systems did strengthen the sector, as they also had to provide adult and community education in addition to operating second level schools.

The Report of the Kenny Commission was published in 1984 and was mainly concerned with the needs of the adult education sector and sought to recommend how best these needs could be met. In essence the recommendations of this commission were broadly similar to those espoused by the Murphy Committee. Some recommendations were acted upon. However its' proposal to set up a National Council for Adult Education was not implemented.

Aontas and the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) were both established as voluntary organisations during this phase so as to promote and prioritise adult education and literacy issues in the country.

2.3.3 **Phase Three: 1989 To Present**

In 1989 a significant development in the adult education sphere occurred with the introduction of the first national second chance education scheme. The Vocational Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) was set up to give a second chance to unemployed people over the age of twenty one years of age so that this group would not be at a disadvantage when seeking employment. In 1997 a new integrated Back to Education programme also provided access to second and third level education programmes. A major advantage of these schemes was that they also allowed social welfare recipients to retain their welfare entitlements. However, even at this stage, adult education remains isolated from the other sectors of education in the country. Irvine (1991, pg.51) highlights that 'institutes of formal education in Ireland vary significantly in their respective contributions to adult education. Little evidence

exists of involvement in the education of adults by the various agencies of elementary education. Secondary schools, which are mainly voluntary schools and run by religious orders, have only recently become involved. Comprehensive and Community schools are more actively engaged in adult education and have directors of adult education in post whose responsibility it is to promote and provide adult education in their respective catchment areas’.

- **Green Paper on Adult Education**

A Green Paper on Adult Education ‘Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning’ was published in 1998 (DES, 1998). A Green Paper is a government discussion document. Interested individuals and organisations were invited to make their opinions known to the government. This was the first Green Paper on Adult Education in the history of the state and was seen as an ‘unprecedented opportunity to develop a coherent policy on adult education in the context of lifelong learning’ (Brady and McCauley, 1999, pg.7). Many of these recommendations were broadly similar to those of the Kenny Commission and the Murphy Committee particularly in terms of the proposed structures.

- **White Paper on Adult Education**

A wide-ranging consultation on the Green Paper took place with the major stakeholders in the sphere of lifelong learning. Following this, in 2000, the White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000) was published. The Irish government has committed itself to implementing the proposals in this document. The main proposals were:

- The establishment of a National Adult Learning Council (NALC) which will involve the stakeholders in adult learning, those government departments directly involved and the social partners.
- The issue of qualifications of adult educators is to be examined by a working group. It will specifically concentrate on those practitioners who do not currently have a qualification in this field.
- The establishment of a forum for adult educators is a priority area. The purpose of such a forum includes enabling practitioners to share information and to develop their policy-influencing role.
- The establishment of a more permanent career structure will also be dealt with under the terms of the White Paper.
- The Guidance and Counselling service for adults is to be enlarged so that all priority groups will have access to it.
- The White Paper also recommended that provision for the following sectors of society to be increased: older people, people with disabilities, members of the travelling community and refugees and asylum seekers. The issue of provision through the medium of the Irish language is also to be examined.
- Under Section 21 of the VEC Act, 33 Adult Learning Boards will be established as autonomous sub-committees of the VEC's. However, approval about how money is spent and all other details will rest completely with the Adult Learning Board itself.
- An additional 35 Adult Education Organisers are to be appointed in order to assist the development of adult education in the Community, Comprehensive and Secondary school. One will be appointed to each of the 33

aforementioned Adult Learning Boards. Two AEO's will also be appointed to a coordinating and policy role with the NALC. The White Paper recommended the appointment of 35 Community Education Facilitators and these were appointed in 2003. Again one will work within each Adult Learning Board area and two will be appointed to the NALC. Their main role will be to aid and advise community education groups, both existing and new.

- The White Paper proposed that the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) will work closely with the NALC in order to develop a system of accredited prior and experiential learning (APEL).
- An additional 20,000 part-time places will be created each year under the Back to Education initiative until 2006. This initiative will be funded to the tune of £1.027 billion during this period and will include VTOS, Youthreach and training programmes for travellers, in addition to a new information technology course for adults.
- The question of fees for adult education was also addressed. Any participant who receives a Social Welfare or Health Board payment will be eligible for free fees, as will their dependants. Some of these participants will also receive a training allowance for the duration of their course. Participants, who are unwaged but are not in receipt of such payments, will receive a 30 percent reduction in fees while the remainder will be required to pay. A working group is also to be established in order that tax incentives for educational funding by employers or employees can be investigated.

2.4

Post-Compulsory Education in Ireland

O'Sullivan (1992, pg.336) states that 'the concept of adult and continuing education/adult learning is being increasingly used (in the Irish Republic) to cover a diversity of educational provision and experience geared to the adult who has broken with full-time education'. Therefore the notion of adult learning is very broad and involves a number of disparate types of provision: courses of a hobby or recreational nature, vocational formation through in-service or retraining and those involving second or third level re-entry and certification for adults. Brady and McCauley (1999, pg.2) state that 'the last thirty years has seen a proliferation of new education and training opportunities, designed to enable Irish people to meet the challenges presented by the dizzying social and economic change that now characterises Irish society'. Basset et al (1989) highlight that 'the vast majority of adult education courses are merely replicas of school or college courses in which mature adults are taught what is often considered to be a hobby or leisure activity' (p.101). O'Sullivan (1992, pp.338/341) categorises adult and continuing provision into five different types in order to highlight the wide range of learning experiences that are currently available to adults in Ireland:

2.4.1

Liberal Adult Learning

This type of provision is widely available in Ireland and characterises the form of adult learning that is most popular in this country. This popularity is due primarily to the success of evening class programmes in local community schools and VEC

schools. These programmes regularly offer as many as thirty different courses in areas such as language, sports, car maintenance etc. Universities also participate in this field providing extra mural courses. He highlights that experiences in non-formal learning are harder to assess and are less systematised than those in formal education. However, he highlights that all evidence points to the fact that this system provides a wide range of opportunities in local communities outside the formal education system, which have positive outcomes for participants.

2.4.2 **Social Adult Learning**

Rural groups like Muintir na Tire and Macra na Feirme have played an important role in this area by providing civic and community courses on topics such as leadership, communication skills, social action, etc.

2.4.3 **Vocational Adult Learning**

This form of education is taken to encompass in-service and retraining courses. These are normally not certificated and although they are advantageous for occupational mobility, they do not count as entry-level qualifications. These courses are provided by both private and state agencies. O'Sullivan (1992, p.339) quotes O'Murchu (1986) who states that 'this is the most rapidly developing dimension of adult and continuing education in universities'.

2.4.4

Certification Adult Learning

This form of learning primarily includes educational programmes for adults which are certificated and lead to second or third level qualifications (or re-entry to such). O'Sullivan (1992) notes that 'the data that exists suggests that, though improving, this is the weakest element of adult education in Ireland' (pg.340). The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (V.T.O.S.) and the Educational Opportunities Scheme have aided this improvement, as has the increased provision of evening and weekend degree programmes by private colleges and universities, as well as distance education.

2.4.5

Interventionist Adult Learning

This form of provision involves areas of society that have great learning needs. It caters for education for adult handicapped people and prisoners among others. Illiteracy is catered for by this method of provision. The V.T.O.S. and Educational Opportunities schemes were set up to provide a solution for unemployment for people in educationally disadvantaged areas. Basset et al (1989) state that adult education 'has tended to be a reactive form of education responding to needs in an intermittent way and remaining subject to the fluctuations of the market place' (pg.97).

The main training and employment authority in Ireland is FAS (formerly known as AnCo). This was established by the government so as to encourage education and

training in order to reduce unemployment. It has a very important role in education and training, primarily providing a wide range of vocational programmes particularly for those who are long term unemployed or have left school with no formal qualifications. Two other government established agencies for further education and training in this country are Cert and Teagasc. Cert is responsible for training personnel for the tourism, hotel and catering industries while Teagasc, the agriculture and food development authority, which lists education of young farmers among its many responsibilities (O'Sullivan, 1992).

The other main state aided programmes are:

Post-Leaving Certificate courses (PLC's): With approximately a 30% intake of post second level students these courses are geared for students who have completed second level education and usually last for one year. Their main aim is to equip students with vocational and technological skills so that they can proceed to employment or further education.

Apprenticeship: This form of practical training involves work based training under the guidance of a qualified tradesperson e.g. Construction and motor trade professions.

Youthreach: This course was introduced to provide education and training to early school leavers without any formal qualifications. It is a two-year programme, which is jointly operated by FAS and VEC's.

Community Training Workshops: These workshops were established to provide instruction in literacy and numeracy skills to students, mainly from disadvantaged areas, with poor educational standards and low self-esteem.

Traveller's Training Workshops: The Irish Travelling Community has generally disregarded formal education considering it unnecessary for their way of life. The Department of Education and Science have established this scheme in conjunction with FAS to promote literacy, numeracy and the benefits of education among the travelling community.

Adult and Continuing Education: The main characteristic of this type of education is that it is primarily voluntary run. The government provides general education through V.T.O.S. and the Adult Literacy Community Education Scheme (A.L.C.E.) (Local Ireland, 1999).

There has also been a significant shift towards vocationalism in Ireland in the recent past and it is still an ongoing process. In this country, vocational qualifications were too often regarded as being of a much lower status than the traditional academic awards. Vocational education and training was seen as 'making workers more efficient' while the academic route gave them more power in the labour market by awarding marketable credential' (O'Sullivan, 1992, pg.348). This dichotomy was also highlighted in the second level system where students had no option but to study for the traditional Leaving Certificate, which is not geared towards labour market, needs.

Irvine (1991, pg.56) points out 'the 'invisibility' of adult education as a distinctive sector in Ireland, resulting in the lack of a common identity among the thousands of practitioners, the absence of a definite career structure and the primacy of the traditional areas of elementary, secondary and third-level education tend to confirm in people's minds the marginality of adult education'. Chadwick (1991, pg.213)

highlights the lack of a comprehensive and coherent adult education policy when he states that ‘in the recent past some opportunities for the production of legislation supportive to adult education have been missed: Two reports were produced in Ireland, in 1973 and 1984, which raised expectations among adult educators but did not, in fact, produce any substantial change’. The Kenny Report (1984,pg. 4) states that ‘there is a shortage of effective tutors of adults, particularly in rural areas. Very few have even elementary training and the official rate of remuneration is too low to provide an incentive’. This is a primary difficulty facing the enlargement and development of the sector in the Republic of Ireland. Many educational organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to retain a cadre of experienced and competent tutors to teach on many programmes. It is extremely important also to ensure that the proposals in the White Paper are implemented as soon as possible and that the sphere of lifelong learning is allowed to develop in a holistic way, rather than merely aiming to gain maximum economic potential from the increased investment.

2.5

Further Education in Ireland

Further Education (FE) is a new and developing concept in Ireland. This section of the dissertation presents recent definitions proposed by Government and the academic sector. ‘What must be borne in mind is that practice in the area of FE is far in advance of policy, and thus any definition of the FE sector arrived at so far must be a tentative one and subject to modification in the light of future developments’ (McNamara, Mulcahy, O’Hara, 2001, pg.6). The White Paper on Education refers to FE as an educational sector in its own right (DES,1995, pp 73-74). In the White

Paper, the term FE is used to apply to Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, with particular reference to

- The Post Leaving Certificate Sector (PLC)
- Adult Education, including the Vocational Training and Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), and
- Apprenticeships.

However, the extent of Further Education has been expanded in recent times by defining it as “a range of post compulsory education and training options provided in the education sector largely by VEC’s in both school and out-of-school settings” (Stokes and Watters, 1997, p. 18). Stokes and Watters describe in detail the FE sector in terms of its assessment and qualifications framework – “the developing qualification system of the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) is increasingly accepted as the definite frame in which provision is set” (p.18) and broaden their definition to include the following:

1. Vocational Preparation and Training Programme (VPTP)
2. Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs)
3. Youthreach
4. Traveller Education
5. Vocational Training and Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
6. Other measures aimed at those who have left school with poor qualifications
7. Other Adult and Recurring Education

(p. 16)

This list is lengthened further in the aforementioned White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000, pg.85) to include -

- Adult Literacy
- Basic and Community Education Provision
- Self-funded night-class provision in second-level schools and other centres.

‘Not included, although a good case can be made, is FÁS (Industrial Training Agency), education/training provision for unemployed school leavers and redundant workers, the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA) (designed to replace the Vocational Preparation and Training Course in the school system), and education and training programmes for people with disabilities’ (McNamara et al.2001, pg. 7).

The Green Paper on Adult Education (DES, 1998) tenders what is perhaps the most wide-ranging definition, describing FE as a sector within lifelong learning informed by the following definition of adult education.

‘Adult Education includes all systematic learning by adults which contributes to their development as individuals and as members of the community and of society, apart from full-time instruction received by persons as part of their uninterrupted initial education and training. It may be formal education which takes place in institutions e.g. training centres, schools, colleges, institutes and universities, or non-formal education which is any other systematic form of learning including self-directed learning.’

(p. 16)

2.6.

Training Courses for Trainers in the Further Education Sector

Generally, training provision in the sphere of teaching and learning for trainers in the Further Education sector is very limited, and a high percentage of such trainers have undergone no formal teacher training or acquired qualifications. The deficits that exist in this sphere are described in the course of the analysis of the results of the tutor survey in chapter 6.

2.6.1

National Policy on Training Educators

‘National policy in Ireland regarding the training of FE educators does not yet formally exist and is only beginning to be developed’ (McNamara et al, 2001, p.10).

The Green Paper on Adult Education recommends the following:

- ◆ The establishment of an inter-agency working group to make recommendations on the formal recognition of professional qualifications for adult education practitioners
- ◆ The establishment of a Forum for Practitioners of Adult and Community Education
- ◆ The development of organised and well recognised mechanisms for in-service training and career progression.

(DES, 1998 pp. 111, 112)

These ideas are developed in the White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000) where the role of the inter-agency working group is further defined as follows:

- ◆ to represent the wide range of agencies in the field;

- ◆ to examine the range of qualifications currently available in relation to the needs of the sector;
- ◆ to identify generic training needs as well as the scope and need for specific training on a selective basis;
- ◆ to explore with relevant third-level colleges the scope for modular and flexible approaches to the development of nationally certified in-service and pre-service training programmes;
- ◆ to make recommendations on the future recognition of qualifications in the Adult Education sector. (DES, 2000, pg. 151)

Policy in relation to the appropriate level of training for educators in Adult and Further Education is also made clear (DES, 2000, pg.152):

‘So as to ensure parity of esteem between the professionals within the education sector, the Government envisages that the qualification as an Adult educator will be a third-level one’.

Policy regarding issues of access to appropriate qualifications is also outlined (DES, 2000, pg. 152):

‘People working in the field who currently lack a qualification will be facilitated to attain certification through in-work education, block release and in-service opportunities. The working group will look specifically at the qualification needs and access ways of those who lack a qualification’.

The key issue for FE in Ireland currently is the need for a precise definition of the sector. The definitions outlined at the start of this section have mainly come about through practice rather than policy. Unlike the United Kingdom, Ireland does not have Further Education colleges, although some of the larger VEC schools are quickly moving in this direction. ‘Rather there are many diverse providers and wide-ranging courses – from large providers to relatively small organisations, from courses taking place in schools to various out-of-school contexts, from courses aimed at unqualified youths to those aimed at mature students. The NCVA, since its inception in 1991, has developed a National Certification Scheme for programmes in the FE sector. In practice, these courses including Youthreach, VTOS, Traveller Education and many others – have come to form the sector “Further Education”’ (McNamara et al, 2001).

As an initial step, research needs to be carried out in order to define the scale of FE in Ireland. Otherwise, between course providers, trainers and participants there will continue to be a lack of structure or permanence and no sense of fitting into an overall picture of educational opportunity.

Chapter 3

Lifelong Learning

3.1 **Introduction**

This chapter of the dissertation explores the concept of lifelong learning from its beginnings and examines the implications this concept has for the area of adult basic education in the Ireland and internationally.

3.2 **Learning and Lifelong Learning**

‘Lifelong learning is an increasingly important phenomenon in society today. The label of 'lifelong learning' is becoming more prevalent in pronouncements of policy and in the rhetoric of practice. Whether or not it is formally recognised, lifelong learning in some shape or form is occurring every day in formal educational contexts as well as in more informal and incidental situations’. (Harris (1999,pg.1). Lifelong learning is a philosophical concept that explores the importance of education as it relates to the individual accomplishments, motivation for self and societal improvement and the expansion of conventional leisure activities. In its ideal sense, lifelong learning should encompass the whole of society and engage each citizen in learning experiences that last for one’s whole lifetime. Lifelong learning is also important for the achievement of social democracy and equity. A central tenet of lifelong learning is the fact that learning is something that must be accessible to all

people. It is certainly not only for select groups in society. Everyone is able to participate in the learning society.

In 1965 UNESCO's adopted 'lifelong learning' as part of 'lifelong education' and the term was further developed in the Faure report, *Learning to be*, in 1972 (Duke 1976, pg. 23). The report highlights UNESCO's commitment to lifelong education as "the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries" (Faure 1972, pg. 182). The concept was originally grounded in the humanistic tradition and therefore saw linked educational reform with demands for increased opportunity and personal fulfilment. In essence it was democratisation through the education system.

The concept of lifelong learning did not begin with its official adoption by UNESCO. Longworth (1998,pg. 8) quotes Comenius' 'Pampaedia' written in 1609 which states:

'Just as the whole world is a school for the whole of the human race, from the beginning of time until the very end, so the whole of a person's life is a school for everyone of us, from the cradle to the grave. It is no longer enough to say with Seneca, 'No age is too late to begin learning'. We must say, 'Every age is destined for learning, nor is a person given other goals in learning than in life itself'.

Learning is a natural lifelong process. However, lifelong learning is more than a simple experiential activity; it comprises deliberate learning and the related processes

that give rise to certain meanings, interpretations and purposes. As Jarvis (1992, pp.11-12) pointed out, learning is:

‘Of the essence of everyday living and of conscious experience; it is the process of transforming that experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and beliefs. It is about the continuing process of making sense of everyday experience... Learning is, therefore, a process of giving meaning to, or seeking to understand, life experiences ... [however] ... unless provision is made for learning, the experience of everyday living may be restrictive, and learning may be limited to the primary experiences of life’.

More specifically, "deliberate" learning (Tough, 1971) is an important component of lifelong learning and, as Knapper & Cropley (1985, pg. 20) noted, has an array of characteristics. For example, deliberate learning is intentional, and learners are aware that they are learning. It has explicit and specific goals, and is not directed at vague generalizations such as developing the mind. The goals provide the rationale that enthuses the learner, as compared with other factors such as "boredom". Further, the learner intends to retain what has been learned for a considerable period of time.

From a broader and more inclusive perspective, Cropley & Knapper (1983, pg. 17), describe lifelong learning as lasting for the whole lifetime of the learner; leading to the orderly acquisition, renewal, upgrading or completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes; fostering and depending for its existence on people's increasing ability and motivation to engage in learning, much of the time without dependence upon

traditional schools or school-like institutions; and depending on the contribution of all available educational influences including formal, non-formal and informal.

Lifelong education has also been prioritised by the European Union since the latter part of the 1980's. In 1987, a 'Standing Working Group on Education' was established in order to examine difficulties in education and industry. This Working Group also set up a lifelong learning and adult education special task force. Consequently, the necessity of 'creating a European concept of lifelong learning and the need for closer co-operation and partnership between all parties concerned with education and training' (Kairamo 1989, pg.3) was acknowledged. This initial recognition was unexpected as prior to 1992 the European Union had no legislative power over the sphere of Education, though it had played a role in education since the mid-1970's. The European Commission has also 'long been exerting a massive influence on the education policies of the member states via guidelines, resolutions, recommendations and reports' (Heinemann 1991, pg.71).

Murphy (1997, pg.364) states that 'it is in the policy of lifelong learning that we see most clearly the connections between education, European capital and state governments. European multinationals, in order to take advantage of their new economies of scale, need a flexible and adaptable workforce. The production of new technologies requires labour, which has the ability to rapidly change its skill base in order to keep up with developments in industry. The political decision to foster a policy of lifelong learning is an attempt to provide this education infrastructure to European big business, a policy that is crucial if they are to maintain their profit

levels. According to Field (1996, pg.131) the European Commission White Paper - 'Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society' states that 'the general objectives of European Policy are:

- Encourage the acquisition of new knowledge.
- Bring schools and the business sector closer together.
- Combat exclusion.
- Proficiency in three community languages.
- Treat capital investment and investment in training on an equal basis' (p.131).

Longworth (1999,pg. 1) also points out the global interest in lifelong learning when he stated that 'the G7 Nations in their Naples Communiqué, called for "the development of human potential through the creation of a culture of lifetime learning"'

Johnston (2000, pg.1) states that 'as we move into the 21st century, the lifelong education dreamt of, almost exclusively by the liberal education establishment has somehow been transmogrified into a universally-acclaimed lifelong learning which is embraced by international bodies, national governments, employers, trade unions and educators alike. This lifelong learning is underpinned by a clear economic rationale, puts an emphasis on human capital and employability and appears to be flourishing within an increasingly marketised and consumer-oriented world'.

Harris (1999, pg.1) points out that the focus of lifelong learning in the 1970's was primarily based on its social benefits and the emphasis appeared to be on social

capital. The perception at the time was that lifelong learning was for 'individual development and therefore for citizenship'. Dave (1976) discussed 'the fullest development of human potential' (pg.3), 'quality of life' (pg.12), lifelong learning 'as a potent instrument to keep up and accelerate all sided development' (pg.12) and 'as a means of attaining the highest form of self-realisation' (pg.12). This clearly illustrates the significant shift from the 1970's to current thinking, which often focuses on lifelong learning and enhanced employability.

Harris (1999, pg.1) states that currently 'the pendulum has swung dramatically in favour of the economic rather than the social'. It must be admitted that the importance of the social goals are still recognised; however they do appear to be considered less important. . As can be clearly seen the current version of lifelong learning has altered significantly from the original concept. The recent European Union reports on the sphere of lifelong learning concentrate on a wide ranging mix of social and economic issues but the focus remains clearly focused on the economic benefits of the concept. Field (1997) also highlights that although the European Union White Paper briefly mentions the need for personal development, social learning and active citizenships there did not appear to be any firm proposals in these areas. The primary significance of lifelong learning was clearly defined in terms of employment and the economy. This needs to be further examined as there is little empirical data, which highlights the efficacy of education and training as a cure for economic problems (Edwards et al, 1998).

Harris (1999, pg.2) holds the view that ‘rather than the primary role of education being to assist individuals to realise their full potential, thereby also contributing to social and cultural development, the focus is more on it contributing to the development of national economic success by developing the human resource capital required by industries and enterprises’. Martin (1999, pg.184) also states that ‘the problem is that although we live in an increasingly unfair and unequal society (and, indeed, world), the current discourse of lifelong learning and the learning society seldom seems to make any attempt to connect with the material realities of ordinary people’s lives. Consequently, it remains at best somewhat abstract and rhetorical; at worst disingenuous and misleading’.

Many commentators are firmly against this swing. Seddon (1998, pg.244) has warned of the dangers of this shift from social goals and considers that it actually threatens economic goals: ‘what is challenging about our moment in history is that it appears to be a time of transition. The nation-building state has changed its mind. It seeks simultaneously to up skill the national human stock and to undermine the social organization of expertise by treating knowledge and values as simple commodities that can be exchanged in the marketplace.... The pre-occupation with the economic goals of education and training reflects this curious contradiction. It captures the contribution of education and training to human capital investment but is blind to the social organization of knowledge and communities that continuously construct and protect cultural resources’. Therefore, a more balanced acknowledgement of the social and economic goals of lifelong learning by governments is now required. As pointed out by Martin (1999,pg.183) ‘it is in social

movements in civil society that people act collectively and dialectically to assert their agency, or their capacity to be free, within the real constraints of structure – often beginning by learning that the first lesson of freedom is to understand the reality of unfreedom. This is where the struggle of active citizens for a truly democratic learning society must begin, and where the learning society must learn to be a society’.

However, not all commentators feel at ease with the whole concept. In fact Illich and Verne (1976, pg.9) highlighted their opposition to the concept of lifelong learning when they envisaged a scenario where workers/learner might easily be pushed into ‘training he [sic] does not want, from which he hardly benefits but which serves to adapt, integrate and dominate him’.

As quoted by McGivney (1993, pg.14), Hedoux (1982) discovered in his study of participation in France that educational participation was firmly related to the degree of each person’s integration into community life. Participants in adult education were seen to be leading a more varied social life than those who were non-participant and were appreciably more involved in cultural practices such as visiting museums, theatres, cinema and reading. Hedoux therefore was of the opinion that ‘a dynamic of cultural development within families reinforces the positive thrust towards education’. He concluded that participation in adult education arises from ‘particularly tenacious social differentiations’.

Barnett (1988) has proposed that there are four versions of the learning society: the economic approach, enhancing quality of life, the democratic approach and the emancipatory approach. He stresses that literature on the learning society reflects at least one or more of these versions and therefore contends that a more comprehensive understanding of the opportunities offered by the learning society can only be gained when one is familiar with each of these definitions.

As already highlighted the economic approach appears to be that which is most favoured by the European Union and national governments. In Ireland the recent adult education government papers have certainly stressed the economic benefits of promoting the concept of lifelong learning. Barnett asserts that his second approach, enhancing quality of each individuals life, is embodied in terms like ‘continuing education’, ‘lifelong learning’, in addition to mainstream education provision for adults. The third kind of the learning society, the democratic approach, links learning with the concept of citizenship and stresses the importance of people learning in order to play fuller active roles in their society. Barnett’s fourth and final approach, is at his own admission rather vague as it has, in his opinion, not been fully developed in the sphere of lifelong learning research. It proposes an emancipatory vision of the learning society, enabling society itself to become more self-reflexive and self-learning. These certainly appear to be related to the aspiration to encourage learners to become self-directed and autonomous.

Effective lifelong learners need to be self-directed learners. Knapper and Cropley (1985) describe effective learners as being aware of the relationship between learning

and real life, cognizant of the need for learning throughout the lifespan, motivated to learn throughout the lifespan, and in possession of a self-concept supportive of lifelong learning. Specific skills for lifelong learning include the ability to set personal objectives in a realistic way; the ability to apply knowledge already possessed; the ability to value one's own learning; the ability to locate information; the ability to use different learning strategies and learn in different settings; the ability to use learning aids, such as libraries or the media; and the ability to use and interpret materials from different subject areas. Above all, lifelong learning must emphasize learners' autonomy and learning life-wide (a wide breadth of learning, not simply length of learning) as well as throughout the lifespan. These are basic principles for lifelong learning of all stripes, including adult literacy education.

3.3 Lifelong Learning and Adult Literacy

In Ireland, presumably a democratic society, the principle of equality and rights, opportunity and treatment is enshrined within the Irish Constitution, Bunreacht na Heireann (Ireland, 1937). However, as previously noted IALS (OECD, 1997) figures have shown that this recognition of rights is true only in principle, for a significant number of people in Ireland. Low literacy skills may prevent a significant percentage of our population from enjoying and exercising their social and political rights to the fullest extent. It is difficult to participate in the community and political arena and to become involved in the decision making opportunities offered to citizens of democracies, when the majority of such events are linked in the main to written

communication. To participate fully in civic life, citizens must have the skills necessary to access and to act upon information. Whether casting a ballot in an election, participating in a community forum, accessing programs and services, defending their civic or human rights, or advocating for change, an effective democracy demands that its citizens are informed and engaged. Johnston (1998, pg.1), Secretary-General of the OECD states that ‘the importance of basic education cannot be emphasised enough... Previous generations referred to the importance of the three ‘R’s: reading, writing and arithmetic. They were right. These are the essential tools for lifelong learning’. Literacy and adult basic education provides those people unable to fully participate in society with an essential set of tools in order to allow them to play a more effective part in their community, in the economy, in the wider education system and even in their own families.

Learning needs to be viewed as a process whereby meaning and purpose is constructed throughout one's lifetime. Through learning, the depth and breadth of life is enlarged and enhanced, making learning life-wide as well as lifelong. Literacy is the most fundamental tool for awakening individuals' interests in self, life, and learning. True learning for literacy should, as Mezirow (1991) stated, help learners transform their perspectives about life. Thus, literacy and learning should not be confined to basic writing, reading, and calculating skills. Instead, literacy needs to be a channel whereby empowerment is the rightful end. At the same time, learners need to learn how to learn, and they need to become self-directed learners, something that doesn't happen within the current more formal and narrow setting. Also, learners also need to assume responsibility for their own learning.

Based on the functional literacy noted earlier, obviously, basic literacy benchmarks are being elevated as technology becomes more pervasive and progressively more complex. To a greater and greater level, literacy is an essential requirement for obtaining information and using basic technology. Without basic literacy, it is increasingly difficult to fulfil goals that form the basis for a secure and satisfying life in a developed economy. In this sense, learning for literacy is the most basic stepping stone in life-wide and lifelong learning.

Literacy is not simply a mechanism for adjustment in order to "fit" or "survive". Scribner (1984) points out that literacy has at least two other principal functions: first, it furnishes power; and second, it contributes to a "state of grace". Literacy as power emphasises the liberating nature of knowledge. As Freire (1970, pg. 205) has suggested, literacy "is truly an act of knowing, through which a person is able to look critically at the culture which has shaped him, and to move toward reflection and positive action upon his world." Literacy as a state of grace is perhaps best appreciated and understood as the tendency in many societies to bestow literacy with exceptional virtues.

The IALS (1995) definition of literacy - 'the ability to understand and use printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential' is a very important definition to comprehend. Fisher (2001, pg.58) notes 'the ability to decode and comprehend printed information is not new to adult educators and speaks to a traditional 'literacy' curriculum. The idea that this information must be applied to

situations at home, at work and in the community moves us towards a process perspective about learning. This perspective speaks to the necessity for us to ensure that the process and content skills we teach are transferable to other situations, personal and social, in which our students find themselves in their everyday life'. This clearly dovetails into lifelong learning. Unesco (1999) also views the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to life outside the classroom as being highly important. It identifies four pillars of education which stress the importance of the whole concept of lifelong learning:

- Learning to know – learning skills required to learn throughout life.
- Learning to do – acquiring skills, especially those needed to earn a living.
- Learning to live together – developing civic values and the aptitude for understanding, working in teams and respecting others.
- Learning to be – the overall development of the human person in all ways.

Many adult basic education students do not come to classes with this capacity for being lifelong learners and often simply lack the learning skills required to build these four pillars of education.

Fisher (2001, pg.58) also argues that 'one goal of literacy programs ... should be to assist literacy students in becoming lifelong learners. Literate people learn independently, interdependently, and continuously throughout their lives. Perseverance along the path to becoming a lifelong learner is required as participants gain the knowledge of how to learn as well as the academic skills themselves'. She further states that 'educators will need to nurture [students'] .. curiosity, guide their

knowledge of how to learn, encourage their inner motivation, and assist their ability to learn independently and interdependently'(pg.58) and points out that 'as educators, our role is to be facilitators and mediators in order for the awareness, articulation and continued application of the skills of learning to occur' (pg.58). This clearly shows the immense skills that are required by all adult basic educators.

The principle of adult literacy education cannot be restricted to helping people obtain conventional reading, writing, mathematical, and the somewhat newer addition, computing abilities. Literacy must be a device for empowerment, unleashing innovative and inquisitive energy. This means that structures and programming to support adult literacy in Ireland must be centred on a holistic view of lifelong learning and giving power to people. Effectively, the features of effective lifelong learning need to be rooted within literacy education, and the target groups for literacy education need to be defined quite broadly.

However, as described by Heath (1986), higher level and, ultimately, more significant applications such as social-interaction activities, news-related contexts, memory-supportive frameworks, and substitutes for oral messages are not embedded in adult literacy education. The notion of literacy for empowerment is completely absent, and practitioners still count the number of words that students should learn as the criteria for literacy education. As a result, literacy is isolated from the socio-cultural context. This static view of literacy ensures that it remains apart and separate from the lifelong learning context.

In order to realize the potential for adult literacy training, and at the same time provide an accommodating and supportive platform for the transition to the full range of lifelong learning opportunities, there needs to be change in the definitions, goals, platforms and policies regarding literacy, learning and lifelong learning in Ireland.

With regard to policy, it is important to include avenues and opportunities for all groups in need of adult basic education, including early school leavers, immigrants, and older people. Also, different levels, different contexts, and different providers need to be available and drawn into the mix. Adult literacy education must go beyond schools and reach out to communities as well as families. This is particularly important in that it will draw people who have negative attitudes towards schools, and encourage them to attend. Also, it helps break stereotypes about schools, education and the student-teacher relationship, and in turn renews and broadens the public's view of learning. Community-based and family-directed literacy programs are essential. Most importantly, adult literacy students need to become active, self-directed, autonomous learners if they are to continue down the lifelong learning continuum.

In essence, adult basic education must be linked to a wide range of lifelong learning activities and opportunities. This is what will draw adult basic education out of its narrow and confining shell and into the broader learning context rightfully associated with responsible holistic participation in the society at large. Redefined, restructured and revamped adult basic education will do much for groups that are currently

excluded from the opportunities associated with full participation in a learning society, and in the end the entire community will benefit from increased cohesion and economic potential.

3.4 Lifelong Educators?

The connection between teachers' professional development and school is made quite explicit: "it is a corollary of accepting the necessity of lifelong teacher education that the very model of schooling and its organisation needs to be reconstituted" (OECD, 1991, pg. 103). Teaching can therefore no longer be defined simply in terms of being mere 'transmission of information'. In order that this becomes a firmly rooted reality, all educators must also become learners. This certainly has serious implications for all educational sectors in Ireland.

McNaughton (1999, pg.19) states that 'arguably one of the best and necessary ways of making lifelong learning a reality is to develop an effective, well trained cadre of teaching/learning volunteers. The idea in a sense would be not only to make each of us a lifelong learner, but also a lifelong teacher. We all have the knowledge we could choose to pass on to others. But we have to know we have the knowledge, we have to refine it, and we have to know how to pass it on to people'. It is clear that learning society will not develop unless teachers at work and during their training appreciate and come to terms with ideas, concepts and practices of lifelong learning. This change will certainly will broaden practitioners abilities, scope and knowledge well beyond present requirements and insights.

Longworth and Davis (1996, pg.89) see this as being a compulsory element of any teaching or training position: 'in simple terms of remaining in employment it is becoming more and more important that people should learn and relearn constantly in order to keep up with the rapidly changing demands of technological progress. So it is with teachers and teacher trainers. OECD ministers acknowledge that 'the quality of education depends heavily on the skill, experience and motivation of teachers and trainers. They, too, should be lifelong learners'.

There is very little indication that a lifelong learning for educators of any type is being dealt with at any serious level in Ireland, and what evidence there is appears to be aspirational rather than contributing to a coherent vision. It is improbable to suggest that lifelong learning for educators will develop into an exact science. However, even limited success in this sphere necessitates a form of strategic planning with a futuristic and long-term view that adequately deals with increasing intricacies in the education system while not being beleaguered by them. Such planning will necessitate a recognition and acknowledgement of the culture of individualism which is firmly rooted in the system as well as practical steps being taken to blur the walls of "privatism" (Hargreaves, 1994) while developing the self-confidence of practitioners, therefore facilitating them to promote and practice a more "interactive" professionalism (Fullan, 1991; Day, 1993).

ILO (2000, pg.1) highlights the fact that 'teachers within adult and non-formal education rarely receive the status of "teacher", which is to say that the salary they receive may bear no resemblance to the salary paid to an "official" teacher'. For

example, in Ireland, there are extremely few full-time adult educators for the simple reason that there are few full-time posts as adult educators. The salaries paid to these educators are generally low – approximately €27 per hour of teaching for an average of three or four hours of teaching per week. In most contexts, adult education is a part-time activity, especially for the adult educators.

The White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000) recognised the specific difficulties with regard to the training provision that exists for adult educators in Ireland. It further stated that ‘in common with many other aspects of Adult Education, the sector compares poorly with the other education sectors in terms of the stability of employment, career options and structures for ongoing development of practitioners’.

The White Paper envisaged a system in the future whereby practitioners of adult education will be trained to third level, professional standard. It is proposed to establish an Inter Agency Working group (IAW) to examine issues of professionalisation, including the feasibility of developing a generic training programme. It is envisaged that this training programme would operate on a modular, in-service basis in the first instance and, later, a pre-service training programme. The work of the Inter Agency Working group will proceed on a phased basis, in tandem with a process of consultation, research and review of best international practice. People working within the service who do not currently have a qualification are to be facilitated to attain certification through block release, in-work education and in-service opportunities. The IAW is to look specifically at need of practitioners who lack a qualification. It is hoped that they will pave the way for the assessment of prior learning, workplace learning, criterion-referenced assessment and community learning. A Forum for Adult Education Practitioners will also be

established to provide an opportunity for practitioner to network, share best practice, inform policy development and develop a peer support mechanism. It was recognised that ‘this needs to be accompanied by systematic investment in inservice training, and by the development of career structures and conditions of employment which reward excellence and professionalism, and which ensure the retention of expertise in the system for the future benefit of the sector and its participants’ (DES, 1998, pg.111). Staff conditions will also be addressed, in consultation with staff interests and in the context of public pay parameters.

The development of flexible qualification for those practitioners who currently lack a qualification was seen as another area of concern, particularly for volunteers working in the community education sector. The development of part-time, block release, modularised and in-service programme should ensure that those who wish to gain a qualification are enabled to do so. As stated by the Green Paper on adult education ‘tutor becomes a co-learner’ (DES, 1998, pg.108). Therefore it is imperative that support should also be provided for these learners in line with support available to all other adult learners.

The inservice and pre-service training forms part of an overall framework ‘promoting teaching strategies appropriate to adults as a key element in the evolution of a framework for lifelong learning’ (DES, 1998, pg.109). It also recognizes that ‘while it is essential that Adult Education retains the flexibility and freedom to draw from a wide range of sources and expertise, it is vital that, over time, qualifications for the teaching and practice of Adult Education be accorded formal recognition.

This process would need to recognise the diversity of the sector and provide for the multiplicity of actors and providers in the field.’ Indeed these considerations are reflected in the strategy document "Strategy for Lifelong Learning" (1996) which proposes that qualifications for adult educators should

- Ultimately apply only to third level qualifications;
- Allow for professional movement between the sectors, through inservice provision;
- Allow for a variety of entry points to the profession reflecting the diversity of those who currently work in the area;
- Address the learning and education possibilities offered by new, multi-media technologies and distance learning.

The term “lifelong learning” calls for a much more extensive range of definitions than “professional development” for what makes up useful knowledge and who sets the definition of ‘good teaching’ that guides learning. While professional development clearly denotes learning for the sake of improving professional practice, lifelong learning is not rooted in any particular moral or professional commitment. The question becomes, learning what, and for which purposes? For example, is learning legitimate if it leads people out of teaching?

The notion of “learning community” that has become popular in schools (Sergiovanni, 1994; Shields, 2000) may help avoid potential individualism, vague purposes or technicist approaches to teachers’ lifelong learning. According to Mitchell and Sackney (2000), learning community is developed through building

three modes of capacity: personal, interpersonal, and organisational. Building personal capacity involves individual teachers confronting and perhaps reconstructing their structures of personal narratives shaping their practice: embedded values, assumptions, beliefs and practical knowledge. Interpersonal capacity depends on fostering both an affective climate where teachers feel affirmed and motivated to participate, and a cognitive climate that encourages learning. Organisational capacity depends upon the productive rearrangement of structures that can enable and encourage collective learning: resources, power relationships, and work design. Are ABE schemes communities that promote personal, interpersonal and organizational capacity building?

If a love of lifelong learning is to develop and grow, then “every school must be a learning organisation” (Day, 1996, pg. 4) and this would involve major shift of focus in this sphere. This required change is certainly a long-term one, but government policy must enthusiastically promote this essential change of approach and set about its advance by putting in place a number of measures. It is becoming rather clichéd to suggest that schools need to become learning communities for educators as well as pupils, but it does indeed have special significance in the Irish adult education sector where opportunities for career advancement are rather limited. Sustaining the profession in this situation is necessary for the quality of both teaching and learning in schools. Greater flexibility in providing in-service training seems necessary and more attention to practitioners’ individual development seems appropriate if they are not to be worn out by the immediacy of the “daily grind” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). A more highly attuned methodology, which recognises this twofold

responsibility in lifelong learning, needs continuous monitoring and sensitively conducted research in the setting. Without these measures, and the list is by no means comprehensive, the quality of teaching and learning in our schools will become increasingly irrelevant to the lives of learners. These issues cannot be ignored. Lifelong learning for teachers requires flexibility, planning, infrastructure, resources, and coherence, as well as much more attention by policy-makers than it currently enjoys.

Chapter 4

Adult Literacy - the national context

4.1. Introduction

The following section will place adult literacy in a national context, detailing the number of adults with low literacy levels, the organisations and agencies nationwide working both to improve literacy levels and to raise awareness of literacy issues.

4.2. Brief overview of adult literacy in Ireland

The release, in 1997, of the IALS survey results, highlighted the extent of the literacy problem in Ireland with 25 per cent of the adult population found to be 'functioning at a very basic level of comprehension in the ordinary reading and writing situations which arise, in the community and at work' (O'Sullivan, 1999, pg.8). These results were considerably higher than were expected and NALA claimed they were 'a warning sign to the government to invest in basic adult education' (Oliver, 2000, June 15). An Irish Times editorial described the adult education and literacy sector at this stage of its development:

'For decades, adult education has been the Cinderella of the education sector. to their credit, teachers and students in virtually every community in the state still forged a dynamic adult education sector and muddled through- despite the lack of support from the state'. (Irish Times, 2000, August 3).

The value of literacy in the daily lives of individuals cannot be underestimated, as highlighted in the White Paper on Education, 'basic levels of literacy and numeracy are an indispensable prerequisite for independent living, for access to education and training and for the effective participation in society' (DES, 1995,pg.78). In the current economic boom, much emphasis has been placed on the need to improve the skills of the workforce but, as NALA have highlighted, low literacy levels have wider implications both for employees and the unemployed. While people need adequate literacy skills to obtain a job they also need these skills to hold down jobs and to adapt to changes in the workplace (NALA press release, 2/6/00). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development reported that 'the quiet contributions that literacy makes to the economy are not fully appreciated...' (OECD, 1997, pg.57). They also highlighted skills shortages as a 'major bottleneck' in the Irish economy (OECD, 1999). With the IALS (OECD, 1997) survey reporting that 25 per cent of the Irish adult population were not able to get beyond level one when tested and a further 30 per cent of the population could not get beyond level two, while 'level 3 is considered the minimum desirable threshold in most industrialised countries' (in Bailey and Coleman, 1998, pg.4), there is a recognition of the urgent need to address low literacy levels, as 'skills shortages both in terms of new entrants to the work force as well as the skills of those already in the work force are now a major barrier to sustainable development of the Irish economy' (DES, 2000, pg.17).

4.2.1

'Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education'

The White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000) offers an important insight into the future direction of adult literacy provision in Ireland. The following is a brief discussion of the recommendations in the White Paper and their implications for the future of the Literacy Service.

The White Paper signals a firm commitment by government to addressing literacy in a strategic manner. There is recognition of the importance of lifelong learning and also of the role of the adult education sector in promoting and delivering that learning. As the minister outlines in the initial pages of the document, ' this White Paper sets out a blueprint for the future development and expansion of adult education, for a strengthened focus on access, quality, flexibility and responsiveness and for the establishment of national and local structures which will help provide a coordinated and integrated approach' (DES, 2000, pg.10). The White Paper outlines the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP), major elements of which have already been implemented. In recognition of the impact of low literacy levels on an individual's life, ' the scale of the problem; the negative implications for the person's life chances; its intergenerational impact and the recognition that there still is a lot to learn in tackling the problem' (DES, 2000, pg.88), NALP has committed £73.8 million (€93.7 million) to literacy, under the National Development Plan (2000-2006).

The main aims of the National Adult Literacy Programme are to:

- Continue to increase the number of clients reached, and the scale of investment, so that by the end of the plan (2006), an estimated 113,000 will have availed of tuition (there are currently approximately 23,000 clients participating in literacy tuition nationwide).
- Prioritise those with lowest literacy levels
- Implement the quality framework
- Continue to develop new methods of targeting the client group, especially through the use of referral networks
- Combine literacy training with other programmes, thereby allowing agencies to combine resources locally to best address emerging needs.
- Continue to develop specific initiatives for groups such as people with disabilities, the homeless, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Expand the provision of workplace literacy
- Explore the potential of ICT and broadcasting in literacy training.

(DES, 2000, pg.88)

This programme plan aims to address many of the issues that have arisen in the course of this evaluation as factors that have posed a challenge to literacy delivery. The commitment of the programme to provide such levels of funding to the service and to prioritise these issues, will improve the provision of literacy generally. The increased funding will allow the literacy service to improve the flexibility and quality provided to their clients and also to improve the range of provision on offer.

4.3.

Causes and Effects

The manifestation of literacy difficulties fall into four broad categories:

- Educational:** large classes, poor teaching, limited remedial facilities.
- Physical/Psychological:** poor hearing/vision, specific learning difficulties.
- Social & Economic:** poverty, poor housing, no money for materials.
- Family:** large size, no habit of reading, other difficulties.

Most people who have low literacy skills will also have experienced a combination of the above. The effects of this can be divided as follows:

Positive: good memory, observation skills and coping strategies.

Negative: generalised sense of failure, negative attitudes to school, poor self esteem, lower social standing, non-participation, isolation and limited employment prospects.

4.4

Adult Basic Education

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is a comparatively new term, which is surrounded by a certain degree of ambiguity. Its meaning is often determined by the interest and knowledge of those involved. Its more usual meaning refers to an 'adult equivalent of the three R's with a new component of social education'. (Inglis, 1986, pg.53). The sphere of adult basic education is concerned with and is seen to refer to literacy, numeracy and basic social/personal skills. Therefore ABE is primarily remedial or compensatory and there is a strong emphasis on the basic survival skills necessary in order to participate efficiently in society. On the other hand, within the whole context of adult learning, basic education can be taken to mean the provision of first or

second chance education for those adults who, for whatever reason, have had limited educational opportunities previously.

4.4.1

Literacy

In the recently published International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), Ireland was found to have a great number of adults with skills below the minimum recommended level in an economically developed country (OECD, 1997). It is estimated that 25% of the population between the ages of 16 and 64 were found to be unable to progress past the first (of five) level in the study. This indicated that this cohort were "only able to perform the simplest of tasks at best" (Morgan et al, 1997 pg.2). A further 30% were unable to progress past the second level, which included information and tasks that one would expect to perform in everyday situations. The IALS (OECD, 1995) viewed level three as the minimum desired threshold in economically developed countries. It was their view that rapidly changing economies constantly require much higher levels of literacy in order that their citizens are in a position to fully participate in society. Morgan (1999, pg.1) points out that 'the findings attracted considerable attention at the time and have been the subject of much media comment as well as being the focus of the work of an Oireachtas [Irish Parliament] sub-committee'. NALD (1998,pg.1) states that 'the survey [(IALS)] shows that literacy contributes to the economy in the form of higher worker productivity and income, provides a better quality of life in terms of reduced poverty, unemployment and public assistance, and helps to ensure improved health and child rearing practices'. Alden (1982, pg.2) states that 'one of the most painful consequences of illiteracy is

the sense of personal shame that often accompanies being unable to read and write in a society in which literacy is taken for granted'.

The IALS and other research in the field have clearly shown that the literacy problem is found in industrialized Western nations. 'Although differences appear in the literature as to the severity of the problem, one UNESCO document observed that an individual 'need only stand at the counter of a post office, bank, tax office or social security office ... to realize that functional illiterates are legion. They have more or less mastered the rudiments of reading and writing But in the jungle of bureaucracy they are lost, entangled in the red tape and incapable of understanding the instructions or filling in forms'. (UNESCO, 1981, as cited in Coombs, 1985, pg.281).

Beder (1991, pg.23) states that 'clearly, estimates of illiteracy rates vary according to how illiteracy is defined, and the more comprehensive the definition, the larger the estimate'. 'Why has the issue of adult literacy become so prominent? There are at least two reasons. First, as knowledge has expanded in amount and complexity in the wake of technological growth, the sophistication required to be literate has been increased accordingly. Thus, while adults were considered to be literate in the nineteenth century if they could write their names, and were deemed to be literate in the 1930's if they had achieved eight grade, today adults are considered functionally illiterate unless they have mastered the complexities of technical manuals, tax forms and the like'. Second, literacy has been linked to worker productivity, and productivity has become a critical issue as this nation's economic prominence in the

world is increasingly threatened'. Kett (1991) also highlights that 'the concept of what it means to be literate is, of course arbitrary and culturally specific' (pg.14). She points out that as society changes the level of literacy skills needed to function efficiently change also. Since the introduction of free secondary education in 1967, more of our population have been able to achieve more than minimum competency. This leads to 'inflation' of sorts with a rise 'in the minimum standards of reading and writing performance that are considered to represent barely acceptable competence'. Therefore people who a few years ago were considered to have 'competent literacy skills' are now considered 'illiterate' (pg.14). This is one of the many problems associated with defining literacy and the measurement of literacy achievement. Charnley and Jones (1981, pg.8/9) illustrated the dilemma facing teachers, planners and researchers when they stated 'illiteracy means the inability to interpret any written message, but literacy cannot mean the opposite, the ability to interpret any written message ... there is no demarcated state that can be called absolute literacy, with an identifiable threshold. Adult reading and writing always takes place in a context of its efficacy can be gauged only in that context. As the contexts change, the threshold of literacy may change too...'. Hunter and Harman (1979) believe that 'all definitions of literacy or illiteracy are completely relative' (pg.101). They define two kinds of literacy: conventional literacy which is the 'ability to read, write, and comprehend texts on familiar subjects and to understand whatever signs, labels, instructions, and directions are necessary to get along within one's environment', (pg.7) and functional literacy, 'the possession of skills perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups to fulfill their own self-determined objectives...' (pg.7). Scribner and Cole (1981) state 'literacy is not simply knowing how to read or

write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use' (pg.236).

Beder (1991, pg.4) highlights that 'overlaid on the discussion of what being literate means is the distinction between basic literacy and functional literacy. Basic literacy is generally defined as the ability to master the skills of reading and writing and to perform basic numerical computations. It tends to view literacy as a set of generalized skills. That is to say, once individuals can 'read', they will be able to read in any context. Functional literacy is a bit more complex'.

4.4.2 Numeracy

Wells (1997, pg.151) states that 'the impact of poor literacy has also been well documented. And it is fairly obvious. If you think of all, of the times you read or write everyday it is fairly easy to get an idea of disadvantage you would face if you could not read effectively and could not write with confidence. Poor literacy skills are a major disadvantage for most people and they are not offset by other skills such as practical or manual skills'. Wells goes on to point out that 'less is known about poor numeracy and its impact. There is less stigma attached to poor numeracy skills and some people boast quite proudly that 'they're not very good with numbers'. There's also plenty of confusion between poor numeracy and weaknesses at mathematics. Plenty of people can manipulate numbers and understand the four rules but have little idea of quadratic equations or logarithms. Are these people numerate?' (pg.152). Beder (1991, pg.79) highlights the example of an illiterate painter who he

encountered: 'not being able to do basic arithmetic, he 'computed' the area of a room by running a special stick along the appropriate sides of a wall and then 'adding' the areas of the walls together. In essence he had invented mathematics for himself, and he claimed that his estimates were seldom inaccurate'. This raises questions about the difficulties encountered by adults with low numeracy skills.

Ciancone (1988, pg.1) explains that 'numeracy', as distinct from 'arithmetic' or 'mathematics', is a relatively new word in the jargon of adult education'. Penny (1984, pg.24) defines it as 'the ability to understand and use mathematics as a means of communication, to interpret a situation given in mathematical terms or to employ mathematics to represent a situation and, if necessary, use mathematical symbols to obtain further information'. In the age of the pocket calculator it has often been questioned whether mathematical ability is necessary in day-to-day life. Few people deny its usefulness though there are different opinions about the degree to which it is required.

Wells (1997, pg.152) reports that the results of research by City University which studied a 10% sample (1714 adults) from the longitudinal National Child Development Study concluded that '25% had very low numeracy skills, which would make it difficult to complete everyday tasks successfully'. Warburton (1982) cites the findings of the 'Adult Numeracy Study' (1981), which showed that:

- (1) One adult in ten are unable to cope with simple addition.
- (2) Three adults in ten cannot calculate simple subtraction.
- (3) Three adults in ten cannot cope with basic multiplication.

- (4) Three adults in ten cannot cope with simple division.
- (5) Three adults in ten cannot deal with simple percentages.
- (6) Four adults in ten are unable to figure out with a simple timetable.
- (7) Six adults in ten don't understand the meaning of the rate of inflation.

'The results of these surveys clearly show that poor numeracy skills must have an impact on adults' lives, and competent literacy skills cannot compensate for this. In Ireland, no similar studies have been undertaken. If it is assumed that the results in this country will be broadly similar then it must become a priority area of adult basic education research.

“For many, mathematics represents a series of random facts linked to calculation performed at speed and comprehensible only to possessors of giant intellect and incredible memory.” (Penny, 1984, pg. 26) Unfortunately this belief is common but there is a speck of truth in it. Ciancone (1988, pg.4) states that 'the power of mathematics lies in its abstract nature; however, this is not the domain of only “giant intellects,” but abstract thinking is something we all do. Abstracting is the activity that makes us aware of similarities among our experiences’.

4.4.3 **Basic Education and the Workforce**

Hager and Gonczi (1996, pg.255) have stated that OECD Countries (and others) have recognised that core competencies such as the need for abstract thinking, the ability

to solve problems, the capacity to work in teams, the ability to communicate effectively is necessary to be productive and for a country to have a successful economy. This also highlights the fact that industrialised countries consider it necessary for workers to be educated for the labour market in order to be effective on the global market. As outlined previously, Beder (1991,pg.1) believes that a major reason for the increased interest in the literacy problem has been the fact that 'literacy has been linked to worker productivity, and productivity has become a critical issue as this nation's economic prominence in the world is increasingly threatened'.

Within this context ABE provision must be seen as very important. However a major caveat of this has been the near exclusive concentration on the economic benefits of such provision. Velis (1990) highlights how the response to the literacy problem has evolved from being humane to now a more economic one. Freynet (1991) also believes that the European view has often been very limited and states that 'the E.C. tends to see literacy problems only in terms of lack of qualifications and unemployment and we must offer an alternative perspective' (pg.7). Hart (1996,pg.101) points out that lack of basic skills 'is a problem that needs to be discussed and addressed in its own right rather than misinterpreted as a danger to productivity and growth'. Halliday (1999) states that 'it is simply wrong to claim a universal link between economic performance and lifelong learning conceived as an ongoing form of skill acquisition' (pg.6). He also highlights that our labour force is often over qualified for the jobs they are expected to do. He quotes O'Donnell (1981) who 'states that there are between two and five million adults not fully literate in Britain who nevertheless perform a variety of jobs perfectly adequately' (p.5).

Braverman (1974) cites Berg (1970) who also contends that there is a serious over qualification in many spheres of employment, especially at the clerical level. According to Berg those employees who are overeducated for their employment were more likely to do a worse job and to be more dissatisfied than the less well qualified.

Johnson and Packer (1987, pg.100) also question the claim that the jobs of the 21st Century will require higher skills. Indeed they believe that 'very large numbers of jobs will be created in some medium to low-skilled fields ... most of these require only modest levels of skills'. In fact Perleman (1984, pg.15) complains of an overabundance of 'college-educated members of the workforce' and warns of 'a rising tide of overeducated and underemployed graduates'. Sticht (2000) reports Judy and D'Amico's (1997) findings that the majority of employment in the United States (65 to 75 percent) 'still have demands roughly equivalent to reading or mathematics as learned by the 3rd or 6th grade in school'. Therefore it would appear that a large basic skills surplus exists. Krahn and Lowe (1999,pg.8) confirm that this basic skills surplus exists in Canada. They report that 20 percent of Canadians work in employment that does not make use of their literacy skills and that a higher proportion of the workforce fall into the literacy surplus category rather than the literacy deficit category. Therefore, the emphasis in the White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000, pg.17) regarding the importance of literacy / basic education for securing employment when it states 'skills shortages both in terms of new entrants to the workforce as well as the skills of those already in the workforce are now a major barrier to the sustainable development of the Irish economy' appears to

be somewhat flawed. There do not appear to have been similar studies in Ireland. Undoubtedly there must be a relatively similar position in this country and this is certainly an area, which must be fully examined.

Our work force must also be adequately educated to be able to adapt to new technological innovations. As pointed out by Tom Stonier (1983, pg.7) 'an educated workforce learns how to exploit new technology - an ignorant one becomes its victim'. Longworth(1999, pg.4) is of the opinion that 'the workers of tomorrow will have several different jobs, several different careers - they will have to be adaptable and flexible and versatile, mentally as well as geographically - they will constantly need to be trained and retained to a much higher level than today, dipping in and out of education as necessary to renew their store of knowledge, skills and understandings'. New skills are therefore demanded and this has led to the increased numbers participating in second chance education. This is a starting point for those adults who wish to advance themselves in the labour market. Basic skills such as literacy, due to the widespread use of information technology have now been redefined. ABE schemes are now providing students with the opportunity of learning basic computer skills. This is due to the fact that it is now recognised that IT could erect another barrier preventing many from participating fully in society.

Literacy is a definite prerequisite to attaining basic social equality and is necessary in order to participate more fully in a society, which requires increasingly complex literacy skills. The White Paper on Education - 'Charting our Education Future' recognised that the Irish education system 'should seek to promote equality of access,

participation and benefit for all in accordance with their needs and abilities' (DES, 1995, pg.7). However, it misunderstands both the nature and the full extent of the problem when it states, 'in general, these provisions [adult education and training] have succeeded in meeting demand in that all those coming forward could be accommodated' (p.78).

Adults have a right to basic education. Unfortunately, sparse resources and provision for adult learning, in particular for literacy work where funding from the Department of Education represents a tiny percentage of the total education budget, are simply a part of the widespread inequalities in the Irish education system. 'The vast majority of adult education courses are merely replicas of school or college courses in which mature adults are taught what is often considered to be a hobby or leisure activity' (Basset et al, 1989, pg.101). The whole area of adult education has been neglected and though the funding and facilities have improved in recent years there is much work to be done if this sector is to rise above the Cinderella status it currently holds in the Republic of Ireland.

4.4.4 **Responses to the Problem**

There have been many responses to the problem of illiteracy. The main response has been to increase provision. There have also been a variety of modes of provision and these often 'parallel current thinking about other types of social disadvantage' (DuVivier, 1992, pg.6). An investigation into the development of ABE provision in

the United Kingdom and Ireland clearly shows that there have been at least five different approaches to solving this problem (Du Vivier, 1992, pg.7):

- **The Schooling Response**

This response views reading and writing skills as essential for all those who wish to fully develop their education capacities and fully partake in society. It views illiteracy as 'a kind of cultural pathogen susceptible to complete eradication by the widespread administration of standardised educational treatment'. (Levine, 1986, pg. 4). Literacy is seen as a body of enduring knowledge and skills that are independent of the learner's environment. A major emphasis is placed on the teaching of the basics of reading, handwriting, spelling and grammar. The main focus is on the cognitive domain and adult literacy is viewed as a lack of knowledge of the correct forms and usage. The causes are presumed to be dyslexia (or other specific learning disabilities) and missing school through truancy or other circumstantial factors. The set response is remedial instruction with increased individual attention. The main aim is that learners will see an improvement in accessible standards (which will be assessed by norm-referenced testing). This response is characterised by its factual and technical focus with a considerable amount of rote learning.

- **The Training Approach**

The training approach was developed from the techniques for mass training as employed in military and industrial settings. This approach recognise that the

demand for reading and writing skills is variable and is very much dependent on the social context in which they are used. 'Functionality' is defined in terms of the skills/knowledge needed by people to '... engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in their culture or group'. (Gray, 1956, pg.19). It underlined the UNESCO World Literacy programme in the 1960's and 70's and is focussed on the practical application of literacy skills. Illiteracy is seen as the inability to apply the skills learned in the classroom to real-life situations. This is seen to arise because schools fail to teach the skills needed in modern society. The solution to this lies in the practice and application of component skills in simulated real-life situations. While methods are not significantly different than those used in the schooling response they emphasise a hands-on practical approach and constant repetition. The aim is that all participants will have reached 'functional' literacy standards and therefore enhanced employability. These are assessed with criterion referenced tests and learner profiles. This approach is very work orientated its focus is rather limited due to this. Students would be taught what rudimentary literacy would be needed for everyday life, e.g. writing notes, reports, etc.

- **The Counselling Perspective**

At the beginning of the ABE movement in Great Britain and Ireland, most provision was home-based individual tuition given by volunteers with little specialist training. Many of these tutors discovered that the teaching methodologies recommended during their pre service training courses were not suitable for their students. These students, instead of focusing on basic skills learning, appeared to value tuition

mainly as an opportunity to talk to someone willing to listen. Due to this, a style evolved which resembles the relationship between a counsellor and client rather than between a teacher and student. 'illiteracy is as much a state of mind as a deficiency of skills'. (Mace, 1979, pg.50). The learner's identity is damaged through social, cultural and educational deprivation. Students are seen as victims who are 'afflicted with a crippling sense of shame about [their] condition'. (Charnley and Jones, 1981, pg. 13). This perspective presumes that the causes are corporal punishment, ridicule and a stigma of failure in school. The response is listening, reassurance and self-expression through writing. It aims to develop the self-esteem of participants the means of assessment focus mainly on the learners own impressions and whether they attempt something previously avoided (such as writing stories or articles in scheme publications). There is less of a factual focus with tutors aiming to rebuild the person first.

- **The Learner-Centered Approach**

During the 1970's and 80's, many developments occurred in the sphere of adult education and these acted as catalysts for ABE workers who were unhappy with the existing approaches. Attempts were made to define and explain the many differences between adult learning styles and those of children. This was done in order to create an effective teaching strategy for adults. It was believed that an adult's concept of themselves is related to their ability to participate actively and successfully in the direction of their own learning. Therefore, it is felt that the learners life experiences, personal goals and prior knowledge must be taken account of when planning and

teaching any programme. In this approach, the tutor facilitates learning by adapting their responses to meet their student's needs. The goals of this approach are that participants will play a full part in society and will also be able to gain access to mainstream adult education. These are assessed via self-referencing and joint assessment of progress. Andragogy is an important tool in this approach in conjunction with the whole notion of co-shared responsibility for learning. Student input is therefore a highly important feature.

- **The Social Action Response**

This response focuses primarily on the political potential of literacy and uses tuition to question the status quo. It arises from a class-based analysis of society, which views educational failure as a system of the inequalities in society. The education system is viewed as further reinforcing social inequalities. Illiteracy is viewed as a form of marginalisation through the differential distribution of knowledge. The cause of this is that school recreates social inequality and reinforces the notion of a dominant culture. The response to this is a raising of consciousness through situational analysis linked to the development of skills. It aims to empower participants to take action for social change and can be assessed by examining student involvement and the sense of power and autonomy for participants. Due to the fact that the social action response challenges the present power relations it is unlikely to receive state funding and support. However, this has inspired some mass literacy campaigns in developing countries and indeed a number of community groups in developed countries (Kirkwood and Kirkwood, 1989). Following the ethos

of much community education this approach focuses on participants learning for power not certificates.

4.5. The Irish Perspective

Ireland, like many Western countries, witnessed a significant rise in levels of literacy in the nineteenth century 'due to a combination of public demand and increased state support for elementary education' (Du Vivier, 1992, pg.1). It was expected that the problem of illiteracy would be eradicated in the near future when the benefits of compulsory education had progressed throughout society. In the first sixty years of the twentieth century, the incidence of illiteracy among the general population was thought to be very small. In fact, the popular idea was that illiteracy had, for the most part, disappeared. Bailey (1999) quotes Charles McCarthy (1960), then General Secretary of the Vocational Teachers' Association of Ireland, said that the population in Ireland 'is almost universally literate; or more accurately... only the unteachable are illiterate. I have nothing to say on illiteracy' (pg.14).

Presently, provision of literacy tuition is the most identifiable area of ABE in Ireland. Literacy work has been developed on a fairly adhoc basis over the past thirty years and was initially operated primarily on a volunteer basis (Inglis, 1986, pg.53). Indeed Chadwick (1991, pg.213) highlights that 'in the recent past some opportunities for the production of legislation supportive to adult education have been missed: Two reports were produced in Ireland, in 1973 and 1984, which raised expectations among adult educators but did not, in fact, produce any substantial change'. The

major reason for the introduction of literacy provision in the early 1970's was due to the 'rediscovery' of the problem in the United Kingdom, where new initiatives introduced (such as the BBC Television series - 'On the Move') heightened public awareness in Ireland. The first official recognition of the re-emergence of illiteracy as a prevalent social problem and the corresponding need for adult literacy provision occurred in 1973 with the publication of the interim report of the government appointed committee of Adult Education. This publication, known as the Murphy Report (because the committee was under the chairmanship of Con Murphy), based its results on submissions received from trade unions, voluntary organisations and adult education workers. The final report stated the following:

"The committee does not know, nor is there any inexpensive way of finding out, the extent of functional illiteracy in our society but through submissions, especially from some Trade Unions, it concludes that the situation is a good deal worse than is generally believed. It has been submitted to the Committee that the level of literacy and numeracy is so low amongst many of the working population that promotion, even to minor supervisory grades, or further training that is not strictly manipulative is virtually impossible for many '(Murphy, 1973, pg.8).

Du Vivier (1992) points out that the initial response to the increased public awareness of the need for adult basic education provision was mainly voluntary in nature and localised' (pg.1). Throughout the 1970's local VEC's set up many literacy schemes. In 1980, the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) was founded by concerned individuals as a lobby group to campaign for increased funding and

improvements in practice. Since 1985, NALA has received aid from the Department of Education to fund its activities. In that year a separate budget was established for "Adult Literacy and Community Education" (A.L.C.E.) and since then funding has consistently increased (although it is still a mere 2% of the total education budget). The government has also recently committed £10 million for the development of the National Adult Literacy Service. Brady and McCauley (1999) state that 'while investment in the literacy service is necessary and timely [there is a great need] to invest in the expansion of the adult education service in general' (pg.9). It is their belief that 'without a general investment students who challenge and overcome their literacy difficulties will not have progression options and others who want to step onto the first rung of the ladder will be hampered to the detriment of the individual, their community, society in general and the economy' (pp.9-10).

Literacy and other basic education courses are provided primarily by local literacy schemes. These are funded by local VEC's from their A.L.C.E. budgets, which this year amounts to just under € 17 million (to be divided among 126 schemes with 23,000 learners). This limits adults to 2-4 hours tuition per week in most schemes. The literacy schemes are managed by Adult Literacy Organisers, who have only recently been officially recognised by the Department of Education. Until this recognition they were nearly invisible within the system despite their many years of service. Brady and McCauley (1999, pg.3) points out that 'adult education and training initiatives receive roughly 2%' of the overall education budget highlighting its marginalisation. Bailey/Coleman (1998, p.4) point out that basic education tuition

also takes place within Youthreach, Travellers Centres, Centres for the Unemployed, Prisons and training agencies like FAS.

The majority of tutors (85%) working with ABE students in Ireland are volunteers. The remaining (15%) are paid on a part-time basis (NALA, 1997(b); Bailey, 1999). There are currently 5386 tutors working in literacy schemes around the country, 4136 of which are volunteers, 1193 part-time paid and 57 full-time paid. (DES, 2002) There has been a vast increase in tutor and student numbers since 1997 when there was 'around 2,500 volunteers contributing to the service'. (Bailey, 1999, pg.16). This vast expansion of the service is further highlighted by DeValera (2003) when she points out that the current number of tutors (both paid and voluntary) equals the number of clients the service had in 1997.

Ward (1991) states that 'the vast majority of tutors are voluntary, and without them there wouldn't be local literacy schemes' (pg.28). According to recent figures published by the Department of Education and Science (DES, 2002), almost 23,000 students are currently receiving help through local literacy schemes (which is almost five times the figure of 5,000 adult learners estimated in The Green Paper on Adult Education (DES, 1998, pg.69) has estimated that there are on basic education schemes throughout the country. In 1995 NALA estimated that 100,000 adults were in serious need of help with their basic skills and that a further 300,000 required help in improving their reading, writing and spelling in order to participate more fully in a society which requires increasingly complex literacy skills were treated with public

disbelief. Both the IALS (OECD, 1997) and the UN (1999) report on 'Human Development' have unfortunately shown the situation to be far worse.

The report on 'Adult Education in Disadvantaged Areas' (Department of Education, 1986, p.18) states that 'illiteracy (or sub-literacy - where not all of the basic reading and writing skills have been acquired) can occur in three different ways:

- Where reading and writing skills are not picked up during the formal education years.
- Where regression occurs: Where the basic skills have been acquired but have been forgotten through lack of practice. (Though this appears to be highly unlikely, Bailey (1999) states that 'if reading and writing skills are not utilised regularly, they can be lost. Therefore people who may have learnt basic skills can become deskilled over a period of time - think of learning a language and then not practising as opposed to writing a bike' (pg.15).) Thompson (1994,pg.344) appears to be in agreement with this point when he points out that 'follow-up is extremely important for consolidating literacy skills and for preventing a relapse into illiteracy'.
- Where the skills acquired (and once were deemed satisfactory) have been proved inadequate later or in another social environment.

The report on adult literacy by the Department of Education (1985) highlights that there is no set time in a person's life when literacy can be deemed unimportant. Indeed it can be most often critical when an older person suddenly is alone (pg.18).

Therefore, the needs/wishes of the elderly must be given adequate consideration when planning provision. Van der Kamp (1997) in his analysis of the Dutch IALS findings also concluded that the 'challenge for adult educators will be to develop new attractive pathways of learning also for older adults' (pg.5). Thompson (1994,pg.343) provides an interesting account of the difficulties faced in this regards when he points out that '[there is a] ... widespread belief among adults that only children can learn' and that 'adults see themselves as too old and incapable of taking on new tasks'. Many older adults have negative experiences from their own school education and consider that adult education will involve more of the same. Teachers' attitudes and methodology are therefore extremely important for encouraging participation and for maintaining motivation.

The Department of Education (1986, pg.18) felt that it is very important to consider what a lack of literacy skills means in practice in Irish society today. The Department's analyst in the course of her enquiries gave many examples from reports. While undramatic, these real-life situations are certainly emotive. They include:

- A mother unable to write a note to her child's teacher.
- A prisoner unable to write to relatives.
- A county council worker unable to apply for a foreman's job because he could not read or write.

There are many limitations placed on people in Irish society who lack basic skills. We in fact, know little about these since the data collected is supplied by the

comparatively small percentage that have so far availed of basic education. The difficulties experienced include poor self-image, lack of confidence, inability to communicate with others, get work or promotion, help ones children or a general inability to fulfil one's potential in society. (Department of Education, 1985; Du Vivier, 1992; NALA, 1997(A)). Alden (1982) in his study on ABE in Canada states that 'lack of basic skills is one of the most important obstacles preventing adults from achieving adequate employment and income' (pg.3). Therefore this can be seen to highlight the hypothesis that lack of basic skills explains much of the reason for poverty and unemployment. This reasoning leads on to the suggestion 'that literacy and basic education constitute a particularly effective anti-poverty strategy' (pg.3). It is this argument, which influences the involvement of government in ABE. In their report "Access and Participation in Adult Literacy Schemes", Bailey and Coleman (1998) highlight the variety of benefits experienced by basic education students and state that "in general it would be fair to say that their lives had changed very much for the better" (pg.38).

4.6. The Adult Basic Education Workforce

The Department of Education (1985) stated "the volunteer tutor has been the backbone of literacy tuition in Ireland since it was introduced" (pg.30). This is remarkably similar to the situation in the United Kingdom. Elsey and Gibbs (1981) pointed out that voluntary involvement is a "cornerstone" of adult literacy provision (pg.9). Albsu (1995, pg.2) state that 'we believe that volunteers have made and continue to make a significant contribution'. They also estimate that in the United

Kingdom 'volunteers contribute about £36 million in 'gift time' in basic skills and it's doubtful if the individual attention and support many students need would be possible, but for volunteers' (pg.2). In the United States, 94% of the adult literacy teachers work part time, and 40% are unpaid volunteers. Beder (1991, pg.135) clearly disagrees with such a dependence on a volunteer cohort of tutors when he states that 'if adult literacy education is worth doing, it is worth doing well. This requires a well-trained, well-paid, professional workforce. To this end, the over reliance on part time teachers and volunteers is anathema'.

In the Republic of Ireland Tutors are recruited in many ways i.e. word of mouth, newspaper articles, community education and literacy scheme brochures. Selection strategies vary from careful interviewing to selection during or after training course completion. NALA (1997(a)) states that all of its affiliated schemes provide some form of tutor training, whether preservice or inservice. However, as Irvine (1991, pg.56) points out 'personnel from adult education who participate in training courses, more often than not, receive no credits for attendance'. There is currently a pilot tutor training certification being developed in conjunction with Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT). This does represent a commitment to a professional approach to basic education provision.

Elsy and Gibbs (1981) point out that 'adult literacy tutoring is a skilled activity, time consuming, energetic and requiring a reasonably good educational background' (pg.45). Tutor training quality has recently emerged as a cause for concern in this sphere. Adult literacy and numeracy requires a highly specialised form of training

which is quite different from conventional teacher training. Whilst NALA regard it as a key element in such provision and a great deal of significance is given to it by many scheme organisers, lack of resources and the primarily voluntary nature of the position make this task extremely difficult. Irvine (1991, pg.51) acknowledges these difficulties when he states that 'to this day, the vast majority of tutors in Ireland are part-timers and a majority of these have no training in adult education. The part-time nature of their involvement raises difficulties regarding their participation in training courses'. Indeed Chadwick (1991, pg.209) clearly points out that 'In Ireland most part-time adult educators seem to have received no training'. Bailey and Coleman (1998) highlighted that the adult learners interviewed for the purpose of their study were in general agreement about tutor training. It was their opinion that 'tutors must be specially trained to teach adults; they must be able to encourage the learners and build self esteem; and they must listen to the learners needs and be flexible enough to respond to them' (pg.31). Irvine (1991,pg.56/57) points out that 'there is little question concerning competence with regard to subject knowledge and expertise of the majority of part-time adult educators but there is a serious question about their level of knowledge of, and their expertise in, the process of adult education, i.e. how adults learn and how best a practitioner may contribute towards their development. Many people in the field, whether trained or untrained as teachers, have drifted into the work and have possibly had little opportunity to upgrade their knowledge and skills. Such a haphazard trend will do little to change the low value-estimate that so many people have of adult education'. Basset et al (1989) highlight that 'many adult educators have only been trained to teach children and most adult education courses take place in a classroom used by children. It is no wonder, then, that many Irish

people think of adult education simply in terms of going to school' (pg.101). In their submission on the recently published Green Paper on Adult Education Brady and McCauley (1999, pg. 18) stated that 'all practitioners of Adult Education should be given the opportunity to avail of professional training, which should take account of the previous qualifications and/or the experiential base from which adult educators come, and be designed to meet their particular needs'. Longworth and Davis (1996, pg.89) see this as being a compulsory element of any teaching or training position: 'in simple terms of remaining in employment it is becoming more and more important that people should learn and relearn constantly in order to keep up with the rapidly changing demands of technological progress. So it is with teachers and teacher trainers'. OECD ministers acknowledge that 'the quality of education depends heavily on the skill, experience and motivation of teachers and trainers. They, too, should be lifelong learners'. Chadwick (1991, pg.212/213) is of the view that 'it should be indisputable that in order to ensure a high standard of provision for students, trainees, employees and others engaged in varying forms of adult education, training for adult educators is a necessity. It is also posited that training trainers' programmes are an essential first stage in establishing and maintaining excellence of provision. There appears to be general agreement that more attention should be paid to training trainers and that such provision should be continuing, irrespective of whether it is concerned with general or vocational adult education'.

'Adults are almost all voluntary learners, and they simply disappear from learning experiences that don't satisfy them'. (Knowles, 1996, pg.83). This is also true for volunteer tutors in ABE schemes. They are participating in the field of lifelong

learning. They are to some extent, still learning and must also be provided with satisfactory learning experiences. This can be done by increasing initial pre-service and inservice training. Elsey and Gibbs (1981) highlight that voluntary tutors often leave schemes before they are experienced enough to be useful (pg.9). This is an area that must be investigated in order that satisfactory service is provided for adult learners on such schemes.

Adult literacy tutors, whether voluntary or in part time paid positions, are a vast, often untapped reservoir of data on the sphere of basic education. A Council of Europe report (1978) on adult literacy in the United Kingdom pointed out that very little was known about adult literacy volunteer tutors at a proper investigative level. Unfortunately this is still the case in the Republic of Ireland a number of decades later. Albsu (1995, pg.2) states that the feel it is important to discover 'what motivates people to volunteer, what they do, how long they stay involved and what kind of support they feel they need'. Elsey (1980, pg.136) notes that for volunteer adult literacy tutors there is an altruistic motive to their work. 'Another factor that contributes to educators of adults having satisfaction in their work might be because they regard it as both important to respond to people's needs and to provide another chance for the most needy' (Mee and Wiltshire, 1978,pg. 95).

Aontas identifies four broad groups of adult educators currently working within the sector in Ireland:

- Volunteer tutors, in adult literacy and community projects. This group generally have taken short non-accredited training courses run by their own particular scheme or project.
- Part time paid tutors or facilitators. This cohort has generally learned their skills through experience or via non-accredited qualifications.
- Skills tutors. This group generally possess a technical qualification but do not necessarily possess any teaching qualification.
- Qualified teachers, with a postgraduate qualification in education. This would also include those with specific adult education qualifications. It was also felt that 'adult education philosophy and methodology should be incorporated into course such as the Higher Diploma in Education' (Aontas 1999, p.19). This is also very important in light of the increased number of adult learners being taught in secondary school situations. With the future expected demography changes this will undoubtedly increase.

As previously stated the vast majority of basic education tutors are voluntary. This is likely to change slightly over the coming years due to the increased funding to the service. However, there are no plans for providing a more permanent career structure for those wishing to work full time in this area. It is obvious that the use of part time and paraprofessional tutors has many implications for the adult literacy service in Ireland. On the positive side, this is inexpensive, and many adults with basic skills difficulties have benefited who otherwise would not have. Yet there are many negative perspectives to this also. Firstly, a primarily voluntary or part-time workforce has a low capacity for professional development. Since many part time

teachers generally have a primary occupation, if they do invest in their own professional development then this is usually for that occupation. Even when part timers and volunteers are willing to be involved in their professional development as adult basic education tutors, many simply lack the time. Secondly, with a part time workforce it is difficult to treat adult learners holistically and to fully meet their needs. Often, part time tutors may arrive, teach, and then leave. Hence, they are not able to fully know learners as real people who are attempting to solve a number of problems. Finally, many part time tutors do not have the skills and knowledge to do the job. Many have had no training at all as adult basic educators. Even those practitioners who have been trained as teachers in primary or second level schools have not been trained in the teaching of adults. Therefore, child oriented techniques may be inappropriately applied. In the absence of a definite career structure these difficulties will be compounded and will further confirm the marginality of adult education in the Republic of Ireland.

Chapter 5

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter positions the study within its methodological framework. The approaches, methods employed and data analysis procedures are explained. The ethical considerations of the researcher are also outlined.

5.2 Approaches and Methods

The methods of investigation were designed with the purpose of better serving the objectives of the research. According to Mellon (1990, pg.49) the two main questions to be addressed were: “who might have the information you need and who is accessible”? As Patton (1990, pg.45) puts forward, “where the focus is on individuals, an inductive approach begins with the individual experiences of those individuals”. The, sample of adult literacy tutors, in the Republic of Ireland provided the main bulk of data. Secondary data was collected from Irish government policy and the available literature on the field, with the purpose of facilitating the research process and supporting the conclusions more effectively.

The study included a detailed survey of Adult literacy tutors. The surveys were conducted during 2001 and follow up interviews with Adult Literacy Organisers and tutors on three schemes were conducted in 2002. At that time, there were 133 ALOs, of whom 60 were working on a full-time basis and 73 were part-time. There were 4,800 literacy tutors at work in 2001, of whom 1,023 were paid and 3,786 were

voluntary (NALA, 2002). In order to begin this process, in 2000, I contacted NALA, who provided me with the details of the 120 ABE schemes affiliated to them at that time. I posted a letter and a short survey form to each ALO so as to ascertain whether they would participate in the research study. A stamped addressed envelope was enclosed. The survey form also asked for current details of the scheme: number of paid/voluntary tutors, adult learners and courses offered. In total 46 have replied with 40 schemes indicating that they were prepared to participate. The initial figures highlight that there were 1506 tutors on these schemes and that 266 (18%) of these were paid for their work. 1500 questionnaires were therefore sent to each of the literacy schemes that agreed to participate for onward distribution to tutors, and a total of 428 responses were received.

5.2.1

Literature Review

The first part of the research was to be by scrutiny of written documents, including transcripts, books, journal, magazine articles and newspapers. These documents represented my use of secondary data. I expected this section to be essential to my introduction to the subject of the study and the wider ideas and issues involved. I gathered and studied a considerable number of reports, papers and other documents of relevance to the subject. These included extensive documentation sourced in Ireland and relevant research conducted overseas.

Hart (1998) underlines the importance of the literature review preceding the research, stating that it is necessary for understanding the specific topic, the research already

made on it, and the key issues involved. More specifically, he defines literature review as:

“The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed”(Hart, 1998,pg.13). In addition, Strauss and Corbin (1998) highlight the role of literature review as a valuable source of experience that leaves the researcher with: better understanding of the information needs on the field, aware of the gaps left by previous studies, and sensitive to the issues he/she might identify in the data. Literature could be a secondary source of data, and help the researcher to formulate questions to be used in interviews and questionnaires, during the initial steps of the research. It can also confirm findings, comparing the research results to past evidence.

5.2.2

Survey of Literacy Practitioners

The major part of the research was a survey of literacy practitioners. This survey sought to gather the views of a sample of literacy tutors. Despite their influence on the learning experiences of countless adults, very little systematic study has been conducted to describe or understand the motivation, roles, and functions of those persons who serve as adult basic education tutors. Who are these people? What do they do? Why do they do it? In order to sample as wide a range of ABE tutor experience as possible, a postal survey was deemed to be the most economically

feasible method. As a research instrument, a properly designed questionnaire can provide both quantitative and qualitative information (Gill and Johnson, 1991). A potential pitfall for surveys is ensuring a representative sampling of the respondents. Following a piloting process, some 1500 questionnaires were distributed to Adult Literacy Organisers for onward distribution to tutors in their schemes. To facilitate responses, pre-paid, addressed envelopes were supplied for the return of completed questionnaires.

In total, 428 replies were received, representing a response rate of 28.5%. However, if one takes this figure as a percentage of the total nationwide cohort of adult literacy tutors this becomes an 8.9% response rate from a total population of 4,800. This is about average for a postal survey of this nature. Replies were received from almost all counties, indicating a good national coverage.

The surveys also yielded a considerable volume of information on previous education and training experience, benefits, frustrations, motivations, qualifications and certification, the effectiveness of current in-service provision, and the desired structure and modes of delivery of future training. The findings of the surveys are used extensively throughout the report. Copies of the questionnaires and detailed tabulations of the results are provided in the appendices.

After analysing the questionnaire data I conducted follow up interviews with an Adult Literacy Organiser and three Adult Literacy Tutors on three different schemes. Each interview participant was presented with the main themes emerging from the

questionnaire and was offered the opportunity to give their own input on these.

5.2.3

Questionnaire Design

It was therefore obvious that a small-scale qualitative study of a particular scheme or a number of schemes would not be appropriate to this task. A more quantitative large-scale study would provide more generalisable, relevant and valid data. However, tutors answers to certain questions may be limited by a purely closed question survey. Therefore, taking into account the time factors as well as the fact that the questionnaire should be as short as possible I included a combination of open-ended and closed questions. Faulkner et al (1991, pg.59) state that this is a 'beneficial' approach. Participants were thus given an opportunity to expand on their comments and this will 'provide greater insight into the ... investigation' (Faulkner et al, 1991, pg.59).

Burns (2000) highlights that 'the survey is the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research and gathers data at a particular point in time'. He also points out that the 'aim is to select an approach that will generate reliable and valid data from a high proportion of the sample within a reasonable time period at minimum cost' (pg.567). It would not be possible to reach a high proportion of ABE tutors in Ireland using self-administered surveys. Therefore, postal questionnaires will be employed during the course of this study. Many postal surveys have low response levels. This means that the information obtained 'may come from an unrepresentative sample of the population ... and will be unreliable' (Faulkner et al,

1991). In order to counter this I was in regular contact with ALO's during the course of the study so that they could assist me in ensuring a high response rate. A large number of the ALO's who participated stated that they personally handed out the questionnaire forms to all tutors in their schemes. Some schemes also requested that tutor surveys be anonymous. While this will prevented the possibility of sending reminders to non respondents, it increased tutor confidence and therefore increased the validity of data collected as tutors were not fearful that they would be identified.

Burns (2000, pg.574) believes that 'a well planned and carefully constructed questionnaire will increase the response rate'. This is certainly a priority area so the survey will be piloted in one scheme in order to 'remove ambiguity' and 'test adequacy of response categories' (Burns, 2000, pg.568). Bell (1993, pg.84) states that 'all data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable you to remove any items which do not yield usable data'.

The questionnaire section of data collection took the form of a postal structured interview. The questionnaire was made up of a mixture of both open and closed questions. This approach was taken to attempt to both retain the respondents' interest in completing the form and also to attempt to gather different types of data. I used the closed questions to collect factual data about the literacy service. The open questions then allowed for the opportunity to develop further on the respondent's answers and views. I did not want to cause inconvenience for the respondents and so kept the length of the questionnaire short. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix 1.

Once the questionnaire had been compiled it was piloted with a group of ABE tutors. This was done to ensure that the respondents were able to answer the questions with little difficulty and that the data from the completed forms would present no problems in the analysis stage.

5.2.4

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Instruments

It is useful to mention the importance of complementing quantitative research by qualitative research, as stressed by sociologists such as Bynner and Stribley (1978) and organisational researchers such as Gill and Johnson (1991). As a research instrument, especially as used in this current study, surveys tend to rely on quantitative information. In order to balance the research results, it is important to also conduct qualitative research such as personal interviews, informal communication with relevant subjects, or ethnographic techniques. According to Bryman (1988) qualitative research can be defined by the use of six criteria:

1. 'Seeing through the eyes of..' or taking the subjects perspective.
2. Describing the mundane detail of everyday settings.
3. Understanding actions and means in their social context.
4. Emphasising time and process.
5. Favouring open and relatively unstructured research designs.
6. Avoiding concepts and theories at an early stage.

(Armitage, 1998, pg.12)

and contrasting one account with another in order to provide as full and balanced a study as possible'. To strengthen this study a multi-method design was developed, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This multi-method approach allowed for triangulation, using three different methods of data collection within the study to ensure that it is as full and balanced as is possible within the time scale allowed.

5.2.6 **Interviews**

The study includes an attempt to gain a more in depth knowledge of the subject matter through the conducting of a series of semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured method was adopted, as it will allow for a list of themes and questions to be covered in each of the interviews whilst still allowing a level of flexibility and change between the approaches to the different categories of expert. The order of questions may be changed depending on the flow of the interview, allowing it to take a more natural course like a conversation. It also allows for the addition and subtraction of questions again depending on relevance to the situation. Such a structure will hopefully lead to an exploration or even explanation of the themes upon which I have already touched in the literature review and tutor questionnaires.

The interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis with a single participant at a time. The venue for the interview was the choice solely of the respondent, to ensure that he/she was as comfortable as possible with the process; where necessary, the interview occurred during the working day at his/her place of work. The main advantage to using the interviews was that they allow for a probing of the subject

with the participants that could not be achieved through other methods alone. As Bell (1995) suggests an interview can be used to follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feeling, which a questionnaire can never do. The disadvantages are the data quality issues of reliability, bias and validity.

These interviews took over three months to carry out. Each interview took between forty minutes to over ninety minutes long, depending on the time availability of the interviewee. A sample interview schedule is shown in Appendix 2. Each interview was taped. The use of a tape-recorder needs some consideration: the advantage of being able to more accurately recall an interviewer's statements was clearly aided by the tape-recorder's presence, but consent was always sought. It was emphasized in both covering letters and in other communications that the individual's anonymity would be respected, but that the use of a tape-recorder was purely conditional on the interviewee's acceptance. It was made clear that the interviewee could object at any stage to the inclusion of certain material on the tape; furthermore, a guarantee was made that all tapes would be wiped immediately after the completion of the dissertation. All taped conversations were transcribed verbatim. A sample interview transcript is shown in Appendix 4. These transcripts were then analysed. Interviews were carried out in a "standardised open-ended structure" (Patton, 1990,pg.289), as illustrated by the interview schedule in Appendix 2. Sequences of questions for the interviewees were determined before the interview.

The structure of the interviews took an "interview guide approach" (Patton, 1990,pg.289). During these interviews, an outline of the topics and issues to be

discussed were prepared in advance while the exact sequence and wording of the questions were guided by the interview. This latter approach allowed me to fill in gaps in my understanding, which the interviewees brought. In addition, I was able to bring my formulated ideas to the discussion, thereby receiving feedback from the participants about the generalisability and validity of my inferences.

5.2.7

Data analysis procedures

The numerical data collected from the questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 9 to generate descriptive statistics. The statistical procedures used were Frequencies, Cross-tabs and Multiple-Response. More elaborate examination and the use of inferential statistics cannot be supported, as data for this study was collected at a nominal level. The intent of this study is to provide description, and not to collapse sample data to generalize to a larger population.

The second major analysis was that of interview data. As the research progressed, relevant and interesting points and quotes were collected into computer files. As more and more points and quotes had been collected, these are separately categorised into different areas such as Tutor Accreditation, Motivations, Inservice and Preservice Training, etc. These categorised quotes proved very valuable in terms of illustrating important ideas and arguments throughout the analysis stage. These quotes form the main body of Appendix 3.

5.2.8

Presentation of Results

This study uses three main sources of information: literature, questionnaires and interviews. Where interview transcripts are used, they are bracketed in quotation marks and the text is emboldened to distinguish them from text quotes. Where responses from the questionnaires are included they are bracketed in quotation marks and are also italicised. Because of the sensitivity of some of the interview material, and because of the promised confidentiality of the interview protocol, I do not name subjects. One participant expressly asked that if quotes from her transcript were used that they would not be identified either by number or letter as she felt that if all quotes attributed to her were read that they might identify her. This was respected and therefore all quotes from interview transcripts and questionnaires are anonymous and only indicate whether the participant was an Adult Literacy Tutor or Adult Literacy Organiser.

The reader may be surprised at the length of some of the interview transcript sections. I have deliberately provided lengthy excerpts from my interviews because I feel that the words of the participants should, to some extent, be allowed to speak for themselves. Many of the participants were more persuasive and insightful than I could have been, and presenting their speech accordingly provides the reader with a sense of "being there" to take part in the interview. The point of interview participation is also significant because, in my opinion, reader, interviewer and participant work together to create knowledge. I, as the researcher, am not

"discovering" or "drawing out" the information that the participants hold; rather we together develop knowledge during our relational interaction.

5.2.9

Ethical Considerations

Undoubtedly, all behavior must be guided by ethical principles which differentiate what is socially acceptable from that which is unacceptable, and, certainly, educational research is not above such conventions (Anderson, 1998,pg.16). Thus, specific attention was devoted to the planning and implementation of this pursuit, for, as Mirvis and Seashore (1982,p.100) warn, "naivete [about ethics] itself is unethical." Since human participants were an integral component in this academic pursuit, the issue of informed consent had to be taken into account. As such, it was imperative that all persons interviewed be informed about the study, their role within the investigation, and how the information they provided would be used. While it may be argued that truly informed consent is impossible in qualitative research (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 291), this issue could not be ignored, and, therefore the participants selected for the study were informed of the nature and purpose of the study. They were given the option to decide whether to participate in the survey or to withdraw at anytime.

The general principles of ethical research include the following:

- The participants' identities must be protected so the published results of the study do not humiliate or harm the participant in any way. Anonymity must be extended to all records, written or electronically recorded, that are collected during the study.
- Each participant must be treated with respect and informed of the researcher's interests. The participant must agree to participate in the study. The researcher must not lie to the participants nor record conversations on hidden mechanical devices.
- The researcher must make clear the terms of the research and abide by the terms of the agreement.
- The findings must be based on the data and truthfully reported.

(Bogdan and Biklen, 1992)

As can be clearly seen from the detail outlined in this chapter the dissertation was conducted according to the guidelines listed above.

Chapter 6

Profile of the Adult Literacy Service

6.1. Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation will examine the feedback gathered from literacy tutors from postal questionnaires circulated to them and the follow up interviews that took place after all data had been analysed. There are approximately 5,400 adult literacy tutors currently working in literacy schemes (DES, 2002). However, during the course of this research there has been a rapid increase in the number of tutor, both voluntary and paid, working in ABE schemes. Indeed the increase is such that there are now as many tutors in the service as there were learners five years ago which clearly highlights the expansion of the service that has taken place in recent years. The issues raised are representative of the views expressed by those tutors who agreed to participate in the research by completing and returning the questionnaires during 2001. Given the high turnover rate of tutors it is a reasonable assumption that a high proportion may by now have left the service. This chapter, therefore, does not detail the views of all tutors in the Republic of Ireland but simply notes the issues raised by tutors who participated in the consultation process via the questionnaires. However, the number and distribution of responses are adequate to provide a reasonably representative profile of tutors.

6.2

Findings and Discussion

This chapter will report and discuss selected findings from this study. As explained in Chapter 5 data for this study was derived from questionnaires completed by 428 Adult Literacy Tutors and follow up interviews conducted with three Adult Literacy Organisers and nine Adult Literacy Tutors from three ABE schemes.

The findings will be presented and discussed in this chapter, rather than the findings being presented here, and discussed in the next chapter. This will allow a more coherent sense of the findings to emerge. The categorical questions in the questionnaire were interspersed with open-ended questions, in several cases one building on the other. Where percentages are reported they are "valid percentages" i.e. the missing values are omitted from their calculation, to give a more accurate representation of the information.

6.3.

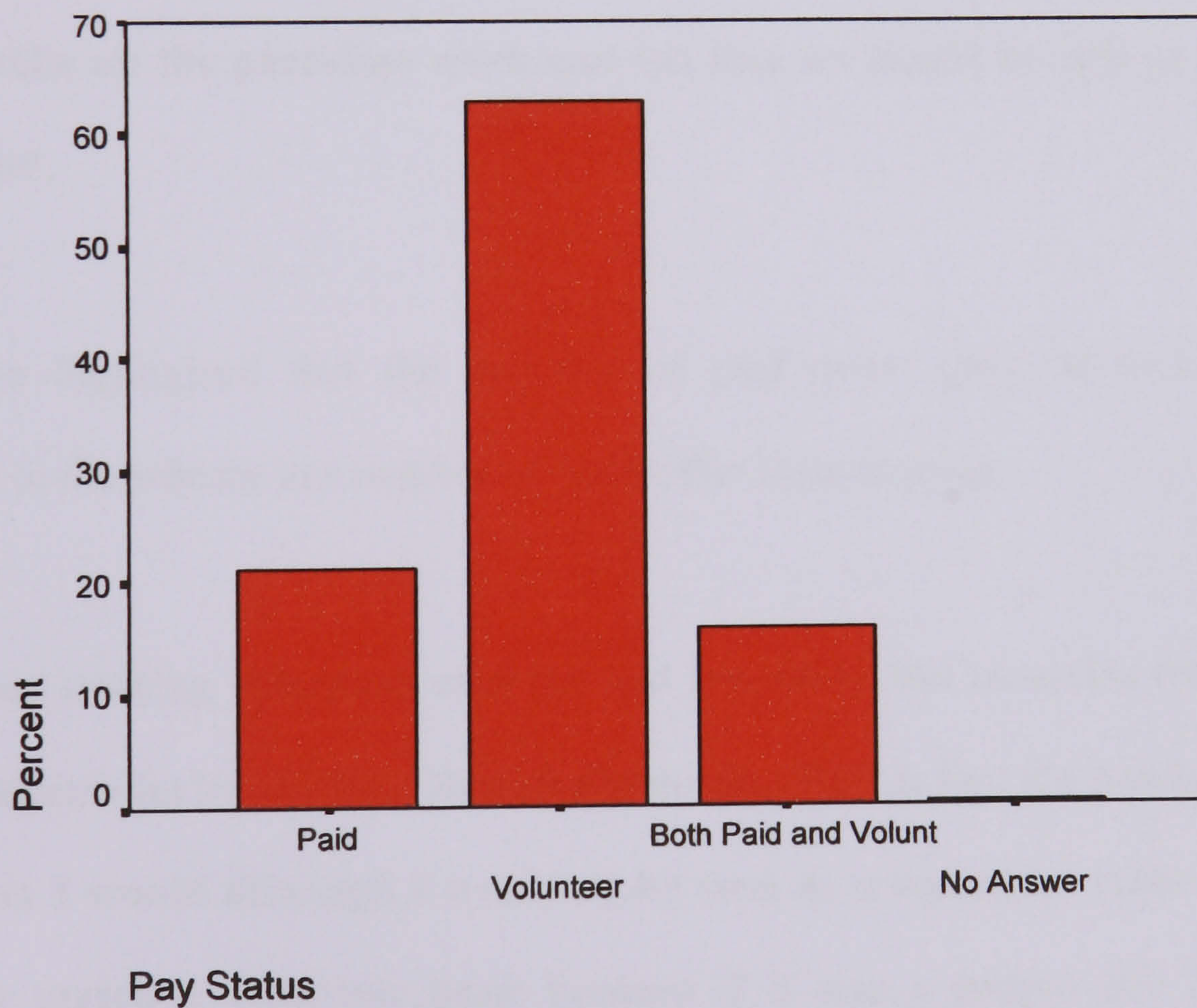
Status of Employment of Tutors

Three-Quarters of all tutors are volunteers and one-quarter is paid (DES, 2002). The comparative distribution of the survey respondents is shown in Table 6.3.1 and Chart 6.3.1. This shows that paid tutors accounted for 37% of respondents, a significantly larger share than they have of the total number of tutors. However 15% of these were also involved in providing voluntary work Therefore approximately 79% tutors in this sample provided voluntary tuition on their scheme. This is broadly in line with current voluntary involvement in tutoring.

Table 6.3.1 Status of Employment of Tutors

Pay Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Paid	91	21.3	21.3
Volunteer	269	62.9	63.0
Both Paid and Volunteer	67	15.7	15.7
No Answer	1	0.2	
Total	428	100	100

Chart 6.3.1 Status of Employment of Tutors



During the follow up interviews it was highlighted that in many schemes it has become accepted practice that paid tutors also take on a voluntary student:

'All of them would take a voluntary student. Now they don't all have one for all kinds of reasons but that's part of the agreement I suppose that they would take a voluntary student'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

This practice was further explained by a tutor who stated:

'Yes, well it's a sort of an act of goodwill too, we came in as voluntary tutors in the days, it was something we wanted to do and it's very rewarding. I mean it was just icing on the cake then when some of us were able to take up the part-time work and felt that we would be able to do, it was great'.

It was also highlighted that the majority of paid tutors gave of their time voluntarily to the scheme in a number of ways other than tutoring:

'I've done nothing voluntary over the last few years but inservice training on the scheme isn't paid for. Oh well absolutely. Well in fact if I worked out my hours I would although I wouldn't be seen as a volunteer tutor I still consider myself a volunteer tutor because if it was a proper job I'd be getting paid for the hours'.

(Tutor)

Paid tutors are generally employed on a part-time contract; they have no guarantee of the number of hours they will be employed from year to year and their hours are often reduced during the year:

‘The continuity, that’s the problem. You can sign up for a course but if the course falls through. If there’s any problem with either the course – after a few weeks you might lose your students, or there might be, especially on Outreach courses there might be problems with rooms and that sort of thing and that course can disappear. And then if it was your main source of income, that’s a very big difficulty’.

(Tutor)

The above figures clearly show that the adult literacy service is primarily dependent on volunteer tutors in order to provide tuition. It appears to be a general consensus that this over reliance will continue due to the fact that volunteers provide an estimated 12,000 hours of tuition per week (NALA, 2003). Therefore the cost saving of using volunteers is significant. As pointed out by an Adult Literacy Organiser:

‘There’s absolutely no way the Department of Education is going to pay for one to one tutors and that’s what you need the volunteers for and that’s not going to happen’.

This heavy reliance on voluntary tutors does raise many significant questions and issues, which will be dealt with later in the chapter.

6.4.

Gender and Age

The gender distribution of respondents to this questionnaire indicates that 15 percent are males, and almost 85% percent are female (with 2 persons not reporting gender). Therefore the vast majority of both paid and voluntary tutors are female, as shown in Table 6.4.1. In particular, 90% of paid tutors and 97% of tutors involved in both paid and volunteer tuition are women. This matches the predominant position of women among ALOs. It is an issue of concern for Adult Literacy Organisers and Tutors alike. Many expressed the view that this may make some male literacy students ill at ease.

‘If you look at the age profile and the gender profile of the organisers and tutors it’s not right’

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

‘I think sometimes men would like a male tutor. I think it looks good if you have a balance. I was actually doing a report there recently, giving a presentation to the VEC committee and I realised all our staff are female and all our tutors are females and I don’t think that’s a good idea’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

Male tutors were often alienated by the lack of other male tutors on the schemes:

'It's not fair on them either; you know they feel they can't join into the various social evenings because they're on their own. And it is a big difference, I don't know how we'll get over that one'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'We had one man who left because there so few men involved'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

However, as pointed out by one participant the voluntary nature of the service may be putting men off tutoring.

'I don't know and I think partly it's to do with the volunteer aspect, I mean women culture is pro volunteering anyway, so perhaps it's from that point of view. I find that if men ring and enquire about the tutor training, they will ask what's the pay, now I shouldn't say always, that's wrong but a number of them will ask, women will never ask, they might think it, but they won't actually ask it, whereas men will say, you know is there pay? Are we paid?'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

The increase in the amount of male tutors could change the dynamic of the service. Indeed one tutor felt that the lack of career progression was due to literacy tutoring being a primarily female domain and stated that **'if there were more men they'd be more demanding'**.

Table 6.4.1 Gender of Survey Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	66	15.4	15.5
Female	360	84.1	84.5
No Answer	2	0.5	
Total	428	100	100

Over half of respondent tutors are aged between 41 and 60 years, with a one fifth aged between 31 and 40 years of age, as illustrated in Table 6.4.2 below. There is a fairly even split between paid and voluntary tutors in all age brackets except in the 60 plus age category where there is a much greater difference between the proportions of paid and voluntary tutors (11% and 23% respectively)

Table 6.4.2 Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
21 - 30	36	8.4	8.6
31 - 40	88	20.6	20.9
41 - 50	113	26.4	26.8
51 - 60	108	25.2	25.7
61 or more	76	17.8	18.1
No answer	7	1.6	
Total	428	100	100

The age profile was also seen as a cause of concern by tutors and adult literacy organisers. It was felt that more younger tutors might change the dynamic of the service and may leave it more responsive to the needs of younger learners.

‘We have a couple of younger tutors and actually they have a kind of freshness and vitality about them that I think is terrific and an energy that the rest of us haven’t got, perhaps gone beyond that. It’s a pity there aren’t younger people, maybe the profile of the tutors who are already there puts the young people off’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

‘If we had probably more younger people that they’d be looking for permanent’.

(Tutor)

‘ I find some of the old tutors don’t even text and if you have a young class and they are texting and stuff like that you don’t know what they are up to and you don’t know their lingo or their language or what they are interested in and it just makes the bridge between you wider whereas if you’re younger you have a little bit, just a little bit, more in common and they might be able to connect with you’.

(Tutor)

6.5.

Tuition Experience of Tutors

Chart 6.5.1 Tuition Experience of Tutors

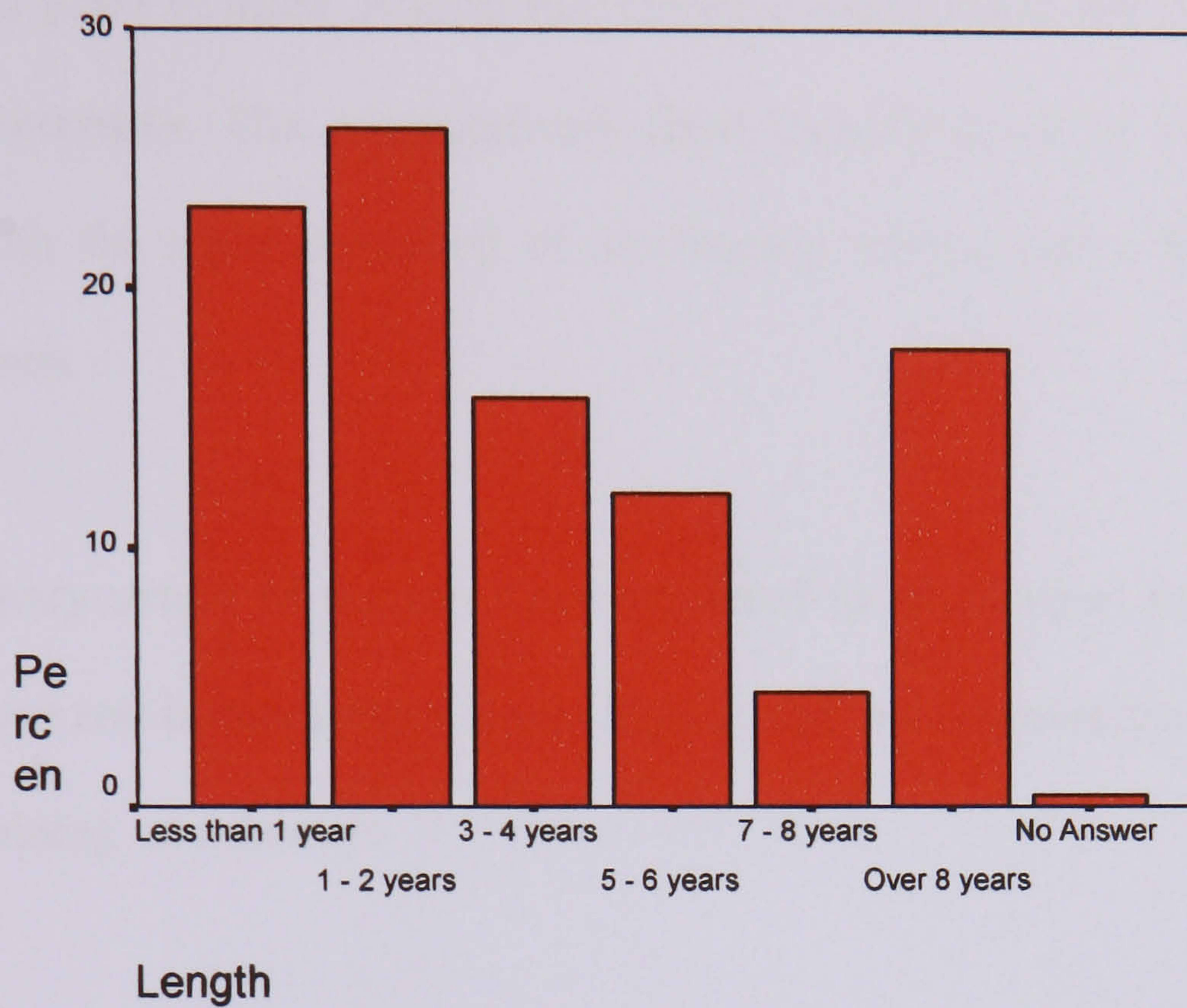


Table 6.5.1 Tuition Experience of Tutors

Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 1 year	99	23.1	23.2
1 - 2 years	112	26.2	26.3
3 - 4 years	68	15.9	16.0
5 - 6 years	52	12.1	12.2
7 - 8 years	19	4.4	4.5
Over 8 years	76	17.8	17.8
No Answer	2	0.5	
Total	428	100	100

Chart 6.5.1 and Table 6.5.1 outline the length of time that both voluntary and paid tutors have been working as adult literacy tutors. More than three-quarters have been working as tutors for less than 6 years, while just under 18% have been working as tutors for 8 years or more. Almost half the tutor respondents (49.5%) had two years or less experience. The comparatively short experience of so many respondents reflects both the rapid expansion of the literacy service and a high turnover rate among tutors.

The voluntary nature of the job was considered to be a prime reason for the high turnover rate and in many cases it was highlighted that remuneration for tutors led to them remaining on schemes:

‘The money is keeping people staying. If you’re doing voluntary work and particularly with the stigma that was attached to it before, it was done at night a lot of it, two years is about all you can do’.

(Adult Literacy Tutor)

‘I see the people who would be as experienced as me constantly being lost to the schemes because unless there’s a living to be made in it people can’t stick with it and I see that and I see there’s very few people I’ve trained with, actually there’s only one person I’ve trained with that is still in the scheme’.

(Tutor)

‘Because you will never keep a cohort of experienced tutors the way it is structured. Because you can only take people with experience em most people are doing it for altruistic reasons but at a certain point if you can’t have a fulltime, fulltime-part-time- it wouldn’t necessarily have to be a fulltime job but if you cant have that pressures, mortgages, children grow up. There’s suddenly more time, I think this happens a lot of women and suddenly when the children are younger you’ve only got a few hours in the week to work and that’s ok but as your children grow up the pressure to actually earn money it becomes much more. So I think unless there is some fulltime part-time tutoring positions you will never have an experienced cohort and it will become a retirement home for secondary school teachers which I think would be very damaging for the service’.

(Tutor)

‘I suspect you will have a lot of teachers trying to transfer’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

6.6.

Type of Tuition Provided

Most of tutoring is provided on a one-to-one basis with nearly 77% of all tutors involved in this, while 36.7% work with groups. There is an overlap of 14.5% of tutors who are involved in both one-to-one tuition. As highlighted in Section 6.3 in many schemes it appears to be a condition of service that paid group tutors are

obliged to provide one-to-one tuition on a voluntary basis in addition to their paid hours.

Chart 6.6.1 Type of Tuition Provided

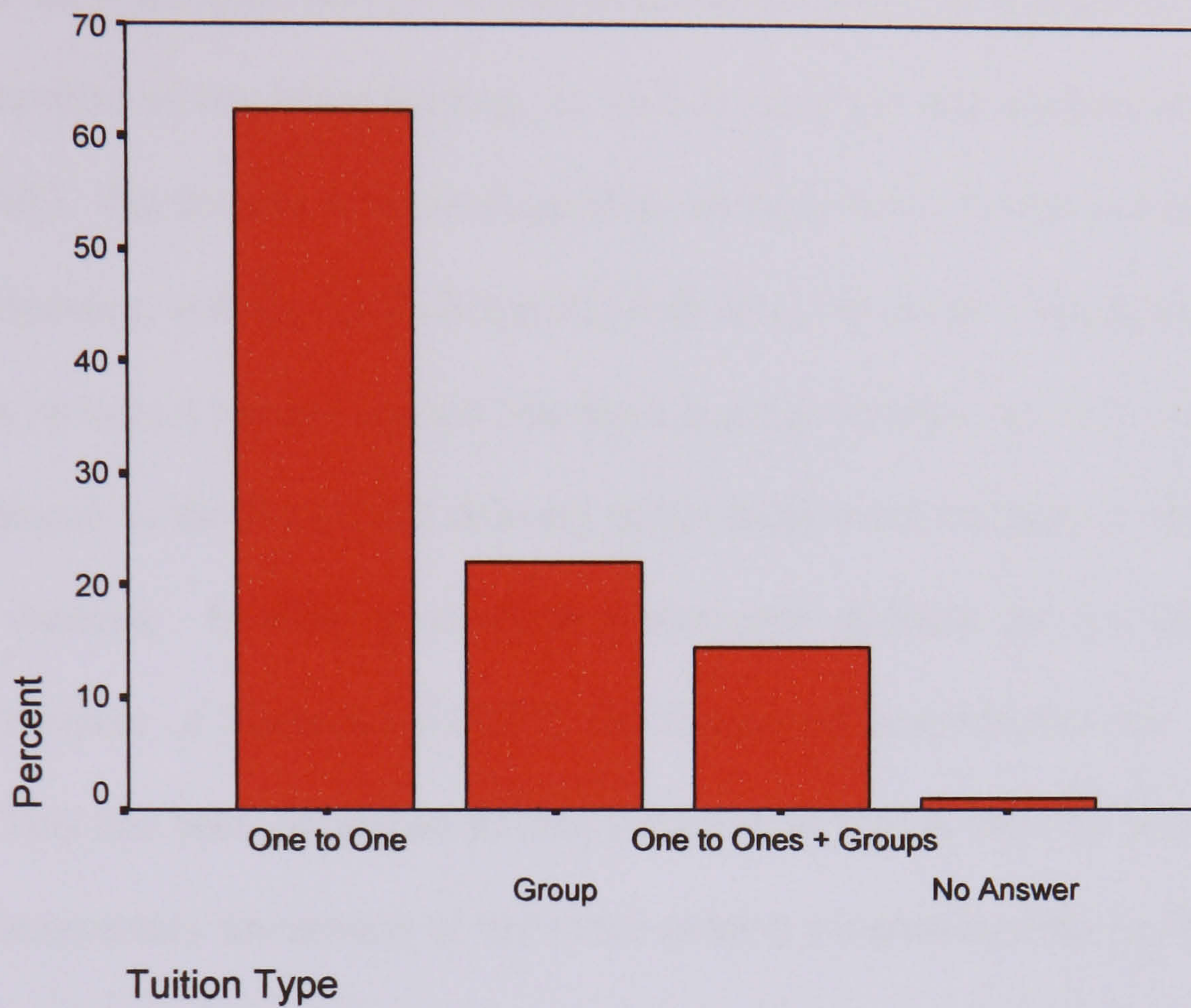


Table 6.6.1 Type of Tuition Provided

Tuition Type	Frequency	Percent t	Valid Percent
One to One	267	62.4	63.0
Groups	95	22.2	22.4
One to One + Groups	62	14.5	14.6
No Answer	4	0.9	
Total	428	100	100

6.7.

Pre-Service Training

NALA recommends that all newly recruited tutors should obtain 20 hours initial training and ten years in-service per annum afterwards. It provides guidelines on the scope and content of the initial training, as well as materials and advisory support (NALA, 2002). The literacy schemes themselves are responsible for the provision of initial tutor training, with the ALOs frequently delivering the course. However during the research process it became evident that there is some variation between schemes in their approach to the design and delivery of the initial tutor training, in terms of scope and duration. In order to establish a minimum standard for this training, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) has introduced Accreditation for Initial Training. This has been developed in conjunction with NALA and the process is based on documentary assessment of the initial training programmes run by literacy schemes. A number of schemes have received accreditation and a further group are going through the process.

93% of tutor respondents had received initial training prior to beginning tutoring and almost 78% of those who expressed a preference were satisfied with this training. Tutors were asked to give reasons why they felt this training was satisfactory or not and it was interesting to note that many of the reasons given by both groups were similar. Those who were happy with the initial training pointed out that it provided them with an initial starting point but that a ten week course would not adequately equip anyone for tutoring, given the wide range of needs among adult learners. They accepted there were lots of gaps but were of the opinion that experience and inservice training more than adequately make up for these.

Those who were not satisfied with the training pointed out the gaps also but most were of the opinion that further inservice training and experience were necessary.

According to some survey and interview participants, the tutoring experience puts new tutors in completely unfamiliar territory. Novices who had had no previous teaching experience quickly realised that they were starting from ground zero. While they were armed with strategies and some basic skills, there were no set materials or patterns to follow. It was up to them and their learner to create the learning experience. From the outset, tutors realised that they had to be extremely flexible and capable of adapting to the particular needs of their learning partner.

The next challenge was to devise approaches and complementary materials that would suit the learner's needs. Each tutor had to develop a learning plan that was sensitive to the learner. While tutors understood the point of this, some wished they had been provided, as a starting point, with a learning plan that could then be shaped to the goals of the learner. While training was supposed to follow the learner's goals, this approach wasn't always straightforward. In practice, tutors found that some learners had very specific goals, while others did not. Again, goals were as varied as the learners themselves. Examples of goals included being able to fill out a job application form, writing a letter to their children's teachers. However, once learners had gained confidence their goals often expanded beyond their initial limited horizons.

The job of the tutor was described as facilitating the learning process according to each learner's different needs. The potential range of the learners' literacy skills was described as vast. At the lowest level, learners needed help in spelling their names,

while others had basic skills but were weak in spelling. Hence, there were few predictable elements in literacy tutoring. This forced tutors to adopt an extremely flexible approach, and perhaps jettison their early idea of how they would proceed. While the tutors came to value their newly learned ability to respond to the individual's needs, it often was not easy. The delivery of good pre-service training for new tutors was seen as being very necessary.

Chart 6.7.1 Pre-Service Training

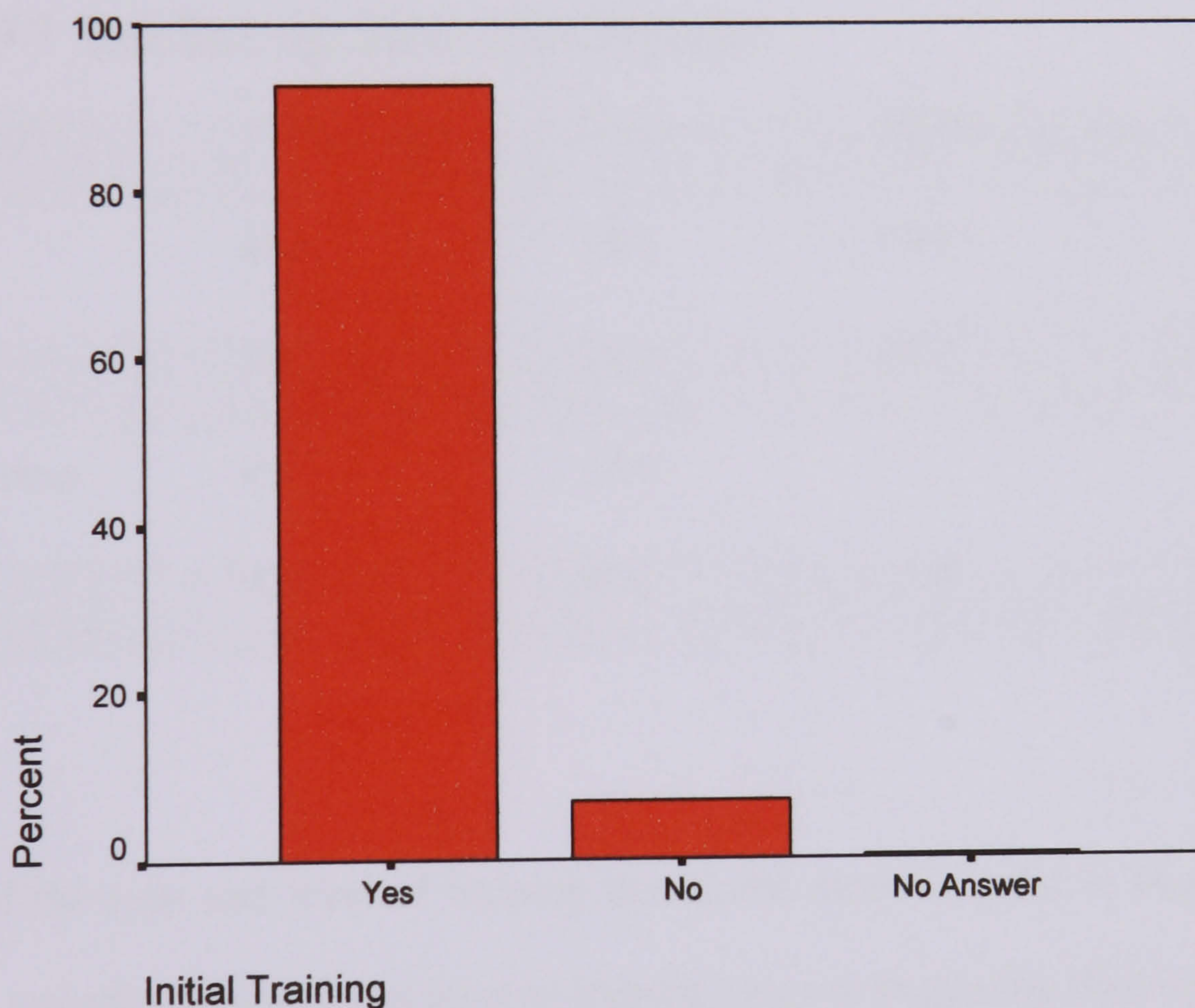


Table 6.7.1 Received Pre-Service Training

Initial Training	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	397	92.8	93.0
No	30	7.0	7.0
No Answer	1	.2	
Total	428	100	100

Table 6.7.2 Satisfied with Pre-Service Training

Satisfied?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	300	70.1	77.9
No	85	19.9	22.1
No Answer	43	10.0	
Total	428	100	100

In terms of the type and level of training that tutors received prior to becoming tutors, the majority surveyed did receive training prior to beginning their work as tutors. The courses attended tended to be approximately between 8 and 10 weeks in duration (16 - 20 hours) and were not, for the most part, accredited. The majority of the respondent tutors considered that the training they had received was adequate. However, tutors had a number of suggestions to improve the training courses they had attended, such as the inclusion of additional practical

elements within the training, e.g. whereby a trainee tutor could perhaps 'sit in' on a one-to-one or group session and could also be offered more 'practical' knowledge or 'tips' prior to becoming a literacy tutor.

It was the opinion of many tutors that initial training provided them with more basic tutoring skills; they admitted that their time was at a premium. Although they would have liked more initial training, it was difficult to find the time even to take the ten-week training course. Several tutors suggested that the best solution, rather than increasing the initial tutor-training course, would be to introduce increased periodic inservice sessions geared specifically for the type of student they were currently tutoring. This additional inservice training would give them more skills and tactics to address problem areas.

'As with most things there was only so much that could be taught in isolation and after 10 weeks it was time to learn by doing. Following the 10 weeks training, tutors were only assigned to students on a one-to-one basis. Tutors would not have been ready for a group following that initial training.'

'There was no point in overloading us with theory that could prove non-pragmatic depending on needs of student – (and an overload of theory can make an impending task seem daunting)'

'The course topics were logically complementary. However, after 2 years I have probably become stale – frequent revision/review programme probably necessary'

'Helps to avoid pitfalls. Its only when one starts tutoring that one really starts to learn. There isn't any way one could be trained – it has to be hands on experience'

'Just enough to begin with – the material covered by course is better absorbed after having some practical experience of tutoring'

'It got me involved with a student and as time passed I realised the problems and that more training was required. In-service courses provided are very worthwhile'

'Yes at the time. Since then both the scheme and I have progressed and further training has been offered and availed of. I also feel that the experience I have gained has helped enormously'

'Training adequate but as I progressed felt I would need more training later for problem I did not foresee'

'I was already a teacher and wondered how the others would manage with so little training. My student is a man of sixty with no reading skills and I have made all the reading material myself. Would others be able to do that?'

'Yes because every students needs are so different our basic training was adequate. No, because once you have your student it would be helpful to have an organiser help plan a study programme'

'Best way to learn is through one's own actual experience. Yes – gave a fairly good introduction to the issue'

This was also highlighted in the follow up interviews:

'Of course, I think there are lots of gaps but I think there is nothing you can do about that, tutors feel that they are not equipped very well after tutor training but they must start to find out where the problems are'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'So most of the training would need to take place on the job? Yes but then we do a lot of inservice and then you can go back if you have a problem and ask a question so it's not like you were trained and then off you go and do your job and that was it, there's nobody there. A lot of support is there. An awful lot of support. It's not that the training was inadequate: it's just sometimes problems that you come up with in class wouldn't have been dealt with, you have to go back and say but this is.. what do you think I should do?'

(Tutor)

'And most of them would say when they are finished, that was grand, that was great, but I'm terrified of taking a student now, I feel I haven't got enough training but what training are you talking about two years or

something, that will actually give them where they feel they had enough training, so the only way is to go out there and get started and I usually start them with a basic student anyway’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

Huge gaps. You know, I mean I did it and God well am I supposed to know how to do this now?

(Tutor)

‘No, and that’s no offence. I think anybody would say that. It’s like any job you do – you get training and it’s not until you’re in there when you come up with the problems, then you meet the people that you are going to be dealing with and you actually start’.

(Tutor)

‘It takes more than your first student. It takes a few years really to settle into it, it really does. I suppose I was quite young then and you do feel that and that means that you’re really preparing, maybe over preparing and over checking things up because you’re not a real teacher you know, whereas as the years go by you realise you are getting it all together for somebody because you have to listen to what they want to do, you are facilitating that, but the training then was fairly average’.

(Tutor)

‘Which would lead me on to say I think we actually should have some kind of inspection. I would like somebody to come in and do some kind of evaluation on my work. You know it’s not that you’re looking to be told you’re brilliant or anything, but it’s more you like to see maybe where you could do better’.

(Tutor)

‘What we’re doing at the moment and this is the second year we’ve done it twice now that the tutors who come on to the initial tutor training course agree to do the NALA/WIT Literacy Tuition module, it’s one module of the certificate course and people are given that information before they start and that’s what they agree to take on, so what they do is 20 hours of initial tutor training course plus 10 hours in-service training plus experience. They have to have, I can’t remember the exact number of hours now, is it 24 hours something like that. Then they compile a portfolio together which is submitted to Waterford and then they get a certificate to say that they have got their initial training’

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

6.8.**Inservice Training****Table 6.8.1 Inservice Training**

Inservice Training	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	385	90.0	94.8
No	21	4.9	5.2
No Answer	22	5.1	
Total	428	100	100

With the increased emphasis on lifelong learning there has been a realisation that not even a very comprehensive initial education programme can equip an educator with all the skills and knowledge that will be required throughout a teaching career. This is especially true for adult basic educators. The service has taken a piecemeal approach to inservice provision and this approach must be remedied.

NALA organises a range of non-accredited courses for both organisers and tutors nationwide from September to June. They are advertised in the form of a printed guide and a glossy in-service training wall calendar, which are distributed to each scheme in September. These materials enable organisers and tutors to better plan their training.

The current calendar (2002-2003) details 150 events and features a very broad range of courses including literacy and farming, the Euro, computers in literacy and dyslexia. They are run mid-week and on Saturdays and are available at a cost ranging from €20-€127 per person.

In-service training for tutors is primarily provided by individual literacy schemes and VEC's. Courses are usually organised by ALOs on an ad hoc basis in response to expressed or perceived needs among literacy practitioners in the scheme. Funding is provided by the VEC's, although the level of resourcing appears to vary widely between different VEC's. The courses are given by trainers sourced both from within the VEC's and externally.

Tutors require additional support through the provision of on-going, inservice training. Tutors mentioned a number of inservice days that they had found to be interesting and informative. Another suggestion to improve the support structures available to tutors was for the Literacy Service to encourage experienced tutors to share their knowledge with less experienced tutors, e.g. by recommending certain materials, etc, it was suggested that a mentoring system could be developed to this end. It was also noted by tutors that there should be more continuous in service training for literacy tutors to assist them in responding to emerging literacy needs and although there was generally good feedback about the in-service training, a number of tutors stated that they found it difficult to find the time to attend such courses.

Table 6.8.2 Tutors Attending Inservice

Attend inservice	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	309	72.2	76.5
No	95	22.2	23.5
No Answer	24	5.6	
	428	100	100

Table 6.8.2 highlights that the vast majority of tutors attend inservice training. As highlighted in the previous section it was stated by a number of tutors that this training was necessary to complement the skills learnt at the initial training course. Most schemes had inservice available. However, a significant number relied on training provided on NALA in the main urban areas which made it difficult for some to attend. This was the main reason for tutors in those schemes not attending, as was the unsuitability of times. Some schemes that relied on the NALA training and did not provide in house training often paid for the courses if tutors wished to attend. However, this was not always the case. It was also pointed out that if tutors attended these inservice courses and subsequently missed out on tutoring they were not paid. This was a significant barrier placed in front of tutors.

The following responses are indicative for many of the reasons given by those who did not attend inservice.

'I work full time during the day. Weekend inservice days are unsuitable mostly when there is so much to catch up on at weekends'

'Not sure what exactly this entails and when available. Haven't attended previously due to other commitments'

'I am a volunteer and don't wish to pay for further training since I am not aiming at becoming a professional in the field'

'Unable to travel to certain regions due to my lack of transport'

Tutors were aware of the value of inservice training but often had barriers placed in front of them that were too great to overcome. The fact that tutors have other commitments due to family or other work commitments mean that even with the best intentions they cannot attend as often as they would like. It would appear that the Literacy Service has in many instances not facilitated tutors to increase their own knowledge in the field. This certainly seems to fly in the face of the lifelong learning approach espoused in official policy.

The cost of attending courses is a real barrier to participation. As a general principle, literacy practitioners should not have to pay for their own in-service training. While course fees are normally paid by the VEC's, practitioners may end up out of pocket if they incur travel and subsistence expenses, and/or if they suffer

a loss in income due to absence from teaching duties (in the case of ALOs and paid tutors) or other paid employment.

In the follow up interviews the Adult Literacy Organisers accepted that the burden of providing inservice training to tutors was often too great for them given the other commitments on their time.

‘We need to do much more on inservice. It’s very hard to get tutors to come to inservice’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

‘I would love if I had somebody who could take over the training. Dream on!’

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

‘Now in-service training I’m afraid we haven’t been doing a lot of it, in-service here in this scheme partly because we’re so busy and we have only one full-time organiser and one part-time for the whole county and we could do with all kinds of staff, a resource worker or a development, that I sent out the NALA calendar to all our tutors at the beginning of September and they are invited to go to whatever they choose on that and we pay for that if they go on any of these and some of them do the NALA WIT’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'They are not getting paid to attend training and sometimes if they go to training they lose out'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'They are losing out on their other job. I had a tutor who went off training last week and she had to take a week off holidays from her other job'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'I think any tutor who doesn't feel they need training has a question mark after them'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'I do understand that because it's during hours you're working that you find you can't do it but if it's something that you really want to do you'll do it, you'll give up those maybe six hours that you would do in those three days and say well I won't get paid for those 6 hours, I'll educate myself and get myself into a position where I could be offered a fulltime job'.

(Tutor)

'There's no doubt about it, doing those courses have enriched my work definitely'.

(Tutor)

‘Well I suppose we’re probably very lucky here that in the sense when we take a day off like that, we will get paid for it, you know and people have gone and done a certificate for a couple of hours if they happened to be working those particular days they’re gone they would get paid their hours’.

(Tutor)

‘I’d like to have the time to do the training. We do get paid time off but if I’m running a programme that’s two days a week in one centre and two days a week in another centre, I can’t be taking days off to do courses because if anything happened, look when I was sick, I wouldn’t feel right about taking days off, I’m in charge, if there are problems, I don’t’

(Tutor)

‘I would love to do an open university degree course or take time out and do a degree course but I don’t have the money and I think it’s more money than time that I don’t have and I would be afraid that if I got out of the scheme to get back in would be very hard. I know I’ve built up definitely ten hours a week and I think if I went back in, I mightn’t be able to get those 10 hours back’.

(Tutor)

In-service training programmes must be responsive to the dynamics of literacy education and the changing needs of literacy practitioners, the Literacy Service and society. Training activities should therefore be evaluated for relevance and impact, and monitored for quality. Research and development are also required to

ensure that the available range of activities are appropriate to future needs, that the objectives of in-service programmes are being met, and to investigate specific issues of concern - for example, why some tutors never participate, or the sources and extent of regional differences in training needs.

6.9.

Accredited Tutor Training

‘The issue of certification is important not only because it offers the possibility of defining standards of professional attainment in literacy practice, but also because qualifications offer the potential of career enhancement. With almost 5,000 literacy practitioners active in the service, there is a significant body of people potentially interested in obtaining qualifications in the field. However, this potential will be tempered by the level of commitment required to gain advanced qualifications and by the fact that there is already a high level of educational attainment among literacy practitioners’ (NALA, 2002,p.54). The NALA/WIT Project has been the most significant initiative in the literacy sector in terms of the development of sector-specific qualifications. The demand for accredited qualifications is influenced by VEC policies, the employment status of literacy practitioners and their career goals. ALOs are required to have the Certificate in Adult & Community Education - Literacy Management, and this will maintain a level of demand for this qualification. In the case of tutors, there is a division between those who wish to pursue literacy tuition as a career and those who see it as a part-time job or volunteer work. The former are much more interested in accreditation. Moreover, paid tutors - or those who aspire to becoming paid tutors - are more interested in accreditation than volunteers, since this

will enable them to take up paid employment with a VEC. Their interest may be more in the qualification than the content.

The NALA/WIT Project National Certificate in Adult & Community Education - Tutoring offers a structured, certificated set of in-service courses for literacy practitioners. Literacy practitioners have the option of taking the certificate course on a full certificate basis (over a continuous period of 18 months) or by the ACCS approach - Accumulated Credits and Certification of Subjects whereby each module is individually certificated and accredited. This enables course participants to accumulate the credits necessary for a full certificate over a longer period of time. According to NALA (2002) 'In general, participants seek to take two modules per year which means that they would take six years to earn a full certificate'.

Looking to the future, the survey results indicate a continuing strong demand for accreditation. Over 60% of tutors expressed an interest in further certification in literacy practice. The survey results on this point are summarised in Table 6.9. The figures in Table 6.9 may overstate the position for the population of literacy practitioners as a whole since it is likely that the survey respondents are more highly motivated. However, even making allowance for this, the survey results disclose a significant interest in further certification. This is very encouraging for the sector but also raises questions why these tutors are not seeking to take part in the WIT/NALA Project.

The survey results indicate a continuing strong demand for accreditation. Two-thirds of tutors expressed an interest in further certification. In meeting this demand, the priority should first be to ensure that as many literacy practitioners as possible can access the NALA/WIT courses. Continuing development of the single certificate modules, and delivery at a wider number of locations are key goals. The nationwide network of Education Centres and Institutes of Technology could be utilised so that the modules could be delivered within close proximity to most schemes. The introduction of evening, Saturday and distance learning options must be explored in order that all tutors interested in furthering their study in this sphere of education are facilitated. Further expansion of the range of accredited courses should concentrate on increasing the number of options available. The accreditation of prior experience was seen as necessary by those experienced tutors who felt slighted that they began at the same level as those who had only begun tutoring. It is important therefore that the Government actively encourages all institutes of Higher Education in the State, to consider developing an accredited course for ABE tutors. The development of a wider range of options can only be beneficial to those tutors who wish to pursue further training. The development of a degree programme was seen as being important as tutors were often of the opinion that they would lose out to those with degrees in education when contracts become available. It is important therefore, that people working in the sector receive recognition for successful completion of training courses. Certification is a motivator in itself but is far stronger if linked to salary increase and career progression. While recognising the restrictions that apply in the sector due to its structure and modest pay levels, it would be beneficial if the VEC's gave more explicit recognition to qualifications achieved in-service as well as

pre-service when making literacy scheme appointments. Moreover, salary increments or special allowances could be linked to key qualifications. These are issues to be addressed by the VEC's.

Table 6.9.1 Support for Accredited Tutor Training

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	380	88.8	95.2
No	19	4.4	4.8
No Answer	29	6.8	
Total	428	100	100

Table 6.9.2 Interest in Accredited Tutor Training

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	265	61.9	65.9
No	137	32.0	34.1
No Answer	26	6.1	
Total	428	100	100

'I really feel that the Department and Nala and I think the organisers for buying into it are doing a huge disservice to the literacy students'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'There might be contracts but it will be interesting to see who will be given the contracts because like everything else if you go to a VEC interview these fellows don't understand things like NALA/WIT they understand B.A., they understand degrees. They don't bother to find out what these other courses are'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'All my group tutors would have degrees. My one to ones don't have degrees. I would certainly find that people with degrees are far more capable'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'If tutors aren't willing to put work into educating themselves, qualifying themselves - I don't think they should be asking to go into the position of educating others'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'I think it's people that have the qualifications, that have the piece of paper they are the ones who will get the jobs'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'I am encouraging them like mad to the NALA WIT because I feel in time that will be enough qualification because it pertains just to literacy and it will be specialised and they will be specialised tutors'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'I have problems with NALA WIT, big problems, I've big issues with it. They don't accredit and again the adult education Maynooth the chap we had out. I had the same problem with him. It has to accredit experience. I mean at nine years tutoring I don't want to be starting back. To be starting back and being told how to manage a group. I know. Just accredit me – for people with flight hours if you like accredit them to a certain point and I'd obviously but I don't want to start back with a tutor who's only had 6 months experience. And be at the exact same level as them? Yeah I don't have time and I don't feel I – for people especially who have put people successfully through, taken groups - put students through junior cert and leaving cert I feel that if their isn't an accreditation for actual on the ground experience that I'm really not interested because first of all I don't have the time. Secondly I want, and I feel very strongly about this, I want it to be acknowledged that experience is where.... there's a huge wealth of experience there and it has to be accredited. Yeah I know what you mean – probably in England they're a lot better at that. And again it would only be a factor for the very few of us around it would only be a factor for you know you could start next year as people came in getting them to do the NALA

WIT but I do think that a diploma after all that work I think that's a degree course. There's 18 modules for the diploma. Its ridiculous. I mean I'm not prepared, I have a diploma in Montessori teaching i'm not prepared to put in the same amount of work for another diploma'.

(Tutor)

'So when people said, we'll professionalise you, we'll make you into "teachers" most people say oh no. Our view is skewed because all we see are the failures of the system but I mean we see a lot of them. Oh we do. I don't think there's a general us and them situation but I think, I see recently a very much a us and them situation developing so eh and I think that is a shame because I think teachers from mainstream schools have a huge amount to give, a huge amount of experience but they have to be retrained in the adult education ethos or else we'll just become a gigantic white elephant because we will not we will only take on fee paying students who come to learn Spanish, we'll never get the literacy student, we'll never get the student that has failed the first time round. We'll become an add-on to people who are already educated which is fine but that's not what the focus is'.

(Tutor)

In meeting this demand, the priority should first be to ensure that as many literacy practitioners as possible can access the courses. Continuing development of the single certificate modules, and delivery at a wider number of locations are key goals. The other issue affecting access is

Table 6.10.1 Educational Qualifications of Tutors

Tutor Qualifications	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Primary Certificate	10	2.3	2.3
Junior Cert. or Equiv.	17	4.0	4.0
Leaving Cert. or Equiv.	83	19.4	19.5
National Certificate or Diploma	55	12.9	12.9
Primary Degree	107	25.0	25.1
Teaching Certificate/Diploma	50	11.7	11.7
Higher Degree	54	12.6	12.7
Professional Qualification	34	7.9	8.0
Trade/City and Guilds	16	3.7	3.8
No Answer	2	.5	
Total	428	100.0	

Table 6.10.2 Teaching Qualifications of Tutors

Teaching Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Yes	122	28.5
No	306	71.5
Total	428	100.0

6.11.

Motivations for Tutoring

Why were participants volunteering to become literacy tutors? Some participants were attracted to volunteerism through the specific desire to help impart literacy skills. They liked to read and wanted to help others to improve their abilities. Most volunteers indicated that they had started their volunteer careers moved by the desire to help others. It is important to note that this motivation was not patronising, but included the clear understanding that reaching out in this manner had rewards for both the giver and the receiver.

Examination of the participants sheds more light on this important issue. Many participants indicated that teaching someone to read was a major motivating factor and a reward in itself. They hoped that new reading skills would bring the same joy to learners that they themselves derived from this pursuit. Many of the tutor respondents had a strong love of literature and the printed word. They pursued reading with a passion and hoped to open up this avenue for others.

Table 6.11.1 Motivations for Tutoring

Motivations	Desire to help others	Count	368
		Layer %	86.2
	Interest in teaching or extending skills	Count	232
		Layer %	54.3
	Desire for a personal challenge	Count	191
		Layer %	44.7
	Previous contact with illiterates	Count	133
		Layer %	31.1
	Had literacy problems yourself	Count	9
		Layer %	2.1
	Other Motivations	Count	53
		Layer %	12.4

Why did participants devote their time to literacy tutoring? Most people indicated that they were prompted to help others improve their literacy skills by their own love for reading. This desire, along with available time and the urge for new challenges, was pivotal to the seeking of volunteer opportunities. Some respondents felt that it was a healthy, rewarding way of adding diversity to their lives.

A few people had sought out volunteer activities as a method of making contacts when they moved to a new community. A number of participants had deliberately chosen tutoring because it fulfilled a lifelong ambition to become a teacher.

As for the structured responses the desire to help others was the most frequently mentioned motive. Adult literacy tutors gave this as being a major influence on them. This was to be expected from other studies.

An interest in teaching and extending their skills came second with literacy tutors giving this as being of particular importance to them. Some of the tutors had some formal teaching experience, or were actually working as teachers, so this could be expected to come high as a motive.

Identifying how many educators are ex-students / trainees of a similar type of further education centre was considered part of documenting 'what is' the current situation in adult basic education. The finding that only 2.1% of tutors previously had literacy problems themselves should tend to allay concerns expressed in the White Paper on Adult Education (DES, 2000) that the professionalisation of the ABE sector might drive out community activists who, as it were, have risen through the ranks, since this seems to be a rare enough phenomenon.

'A lot of time their skills wouldn't really be up to it and a lot of time people who would be on the schemes themselves would not be altruistic by nature. They have enough to cope with in their own life. You can only start giving back when you are at a position that your own life is not full of complications and most people I would have taught at a literacy level would have enough to do living their own life than thinking of giving things back. I think I think it would be maybe in fifteen years after they came then there might be a

situation. I would be very surprised, most of the people I would have taught on a one-to-one basis who I know, their lives were entirely complicated and I wouldn't imagine that they would have two hours in a week and the poverty as well. I mean if they were not getting paid but I think people are good-hearted towards the scheme and would help but I don't think people would have enough space in their life'.

(Tutor)

Specific initiatives to encourage and facilitate people who have themselves been ABE students to train as ABE educators should be considered.

It must be taken into account that it is not easy, even for the tutors concerned, to give an accurate assessment of their initial motivations. The questions about why they became literacy tutors should have been asked at the time of joining, not, as in this research, somewhere between a few months and a few years later which inevitably subjects them to distortions of time. It is also important to remember that the reasons for being a literacy tutor at the beginning may bear very little resemblance to those which keep a person active in the work later on.

'Yes, I would see they are probably the reasons. When I'm talking to people if they feel they want to further their career or they feel it would be good on their CV I'm not terribly keen on that because I feel the voluntary issue is ignored in that and that perhaps if they thought more carefully about it that they wouldn't make good volunteer tutors. I think that is changing, I think

I'll have to change; there are not enough people maybe who just want to do it for altruistic reasons anymore. You know compared to when I started which is a long time ago there was nothing, I mean if you got two hours you were very, very lucky and that's a way down the line, but times have changed and there's so much publicity around literacy now that people see it as maybe a move or good on the CV or something, but I think I'll have to change around the CV bit and think yeah if they want to put it on their CV, but experience has shown me that they actually very seldom stay and we need tutors who'll stay, and that's not much use to people who want it on their CVs.'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'If you're approaching it in a different way when you going it, one to one volunteer literacy tutor, you're absolutely want to help somebody. It's vital you do that. The other is a job and that's where the volunteer bit if it moves out it's a shame but in another way it's inviting be paid. It will take away something from it I do think that. I've always said that literacy tutors are special, they just have some other quality, I don't know, all volunteers have that quality'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'I think anybody who volunteers to do literacy work and become literacy tutors they are quite special really and I think that's probably the main thing they have is that they have that empathy with the people and that comes

across very well with tutors and students. I have very, very rarely come across a tutor who didn't get with a student or vice versa.'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'Women are at home and they have a few hours in the morning and they have an hour in the evenings as well but that's why – and they've done, taken on volunteer because they want to do something, they don't want to stay at home and all of a sudden money is being made available and they started doing paid work but I think everybody, any woman that went into it is generally a mother had a few hours to spare and wanted to give something back to the community or wanted to do something with their time and were interested in literacy and where its going. Then when money came in they started to do maybe a few more hours because they were getting the bit of money for it'.

(Tutor)

6.12.

Benefits/Satisfactions of Tutoring

Clearly, judging from the questionnaires and interviews, most tutors gained new capabilities or refreshed previously learned skills as a result of this experience.

Their enthusiasm about their experience clearly demonstrated that volunteers feel richly rewarded in the course of helping others improve literacy skills. Volunteering was repeatedly described as a deeply rewarding experience. Although working with

learners had its frustrating moments, almost everyone who completed the survey concluded that it had been a fulfilling experience.

Although the rewards were of a non-monetary kind, they clearly had tremendous value to volunteers. They spoke of the perceptible changes to demeanor and appearance that resulted as learners progressed. The slow movement towards attaining literacy and numeracy skills worked wonders on learners' self-esteem. With the help of their tutors, learners visibly blossomed.

'I'd say there's a great camaraderie among the tutors; you know the get together it's great, and there's great support there. I've got a free education for myself through NALA, which is wonderful. Yes, I have benefited so much, I couldn't even start to list it really'.

(Tutor)

'Well there's interaction between tutors, the social aspect as well. I think that's very, very important. I certainly would see that from my point of view, I feel that I have made great friends through the scheme and through the tutoring initially and now the organising. I think that is very important, particularly for women and women in the home that it's an outlet and at the same time they feel they are doing something worthwhile and yet it is stretching them that little bit as well, pushing them that little bit and they do the training, I think that is probably the best bit that I've seen tutors who've said they would never ... quite nervous doing the teacher training, go on and then do the modules in WIT and are very successful and that has given confidence'.

'I mean I have learned so much more and not even that going on the scheme has opened my eyes to more stuff. Like I've done the JEB, I am doing the Nala /Wit course, I am also doing a course about literacy on computers. So I haven't just gone there and said I know everything – it opens your eyes to stuff that you as a tutor should be learning, developing your skills and your academic side as well as developing your students side'.

(Tutor)

Table 6.12.1 Benefits/Satisfactions of Tutoring

Benefits/Satisfactions	Had a feeling of doing something worthwhile for others	Count	410
		Layer	96.7
		%	
	Increased your self confidence	Count	208
		Layer	49.1
		%	
	Had pleasure in learning new skills	Count	284
		Layer	67.0
		%	
	Seen new opportunities for developing your own capabilities	Count	222
		Layer	52.4
		%	
	Other Benefits	Count	44
		Layer	10.4
		%	

6.13.

Frustrations of Tutoring

The challenges and frustrations were explored both within the context of the interviews and the survey. The information gathered from both research approaches was consistent and complementary. However, the interviews provided considerable opportunity to air dissatisfactions and concerns, and consequently shed more light on issues that make volunteering a challenging experience. Tutors also reflected that often the rewards could be few and far between. And, in some particularly frustrating relationships, the small rewards in the form of progress had to be savoured.

Teaching frustrations, expressed in the following comments: "*when progress is slow with the learner*"; "*that a student may not reach her goals*"; "*watching someone else's frustrations*"; and "*being looked at as discreditable as a workforce.*" Clearly, most of the sense of defeat that tutors experience would seem to be an empathetic response to learners' difficulties in mastering new literacy skills.

Lack of learner commitment was also a cause for dissatisfaction among some tutors. Indeed, some tutors had initially concluded that this lack of commitment was a response to them. After getting to know their learning partners better they understood that arriving late or not at all, for instance, was a function of other factors. According to focus group participants, late arrivals and no-shows were a source of frustration for a few tutors. Unfortunately, some tutors found that some learners were unpredictable and repeatedly arrived much later than planned. This created considerable scheduling problems and left tutors wondering if this reflected the

learner's lack of commitment to the tutoring relationship. Did it mean that their tutoring skills were lacking, or that they were not able to form a strong connection with the learner? Time pressures were an extra burden for a minority of volunteers who were juggling a number of other commitments. Some tutors felt that they were wasting time when their learners were not punctual. In a few instances learners didn't come at all.

'It's different on one-to-one but attendance, I build bad attendance, I assume bad attendance when I am taking a group. And then it doesn't cause as much frustration. Yeah, I build that into, I never give anything that lags over two classes. Every lesson is a unit in itself so that if somebody's missed it or and comes back the next week you'll deal with it then. Yeah. So that I never run anything over. I've learned skills to cope around that but it's not as frustrating as it used to be'.

(Tutor)

'They always have that feeling and that I think probably leads to drop out in tutors. They don't have the confidence, particularly new tutors, if a student lets them down, that's it. Very difficult to get them to come back and start again'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

Table 6.13.1 Frustrations of Tutoring

Frustrations	Shortage of Teaching Materials	Count	83
		Column	18.1
		%	
	Could not get through to a student	Count	145
		Column	31.7
		%	
	The same student failing to turn up on several occasions	Count	164
		Column	35.8
		%	
	Inadequate support and encouragement	Count	17
		Column	3.7
		%	
	Other frustration	Count	49
		Column	10.7
		%	

6.14.

Benefits Experienced By Learners

By far the main identified benefit for adults attending ABE schemes was perceived to be a significant increase in confidence. As one interview participant stated:

‘The confidence is the big thing and it’s amazing actually - their whole appearance can even change’.

(Tutor)

Staff felt that The Department of Education and Science were currently emphasising the importance of literacy skills in improving employment chances and that the holistic, learner-centred approach was currently under threat. There was fear expressed that increased funding and the pressure to improve workplace skills would result in a neglect of the personal development aspects of literacy provision. These concerns need to be addressed by the Literacy Service. The service is currently on the threshold of considerable change and there is a need to address the apprehension of staff in approaching that change.

‘Certainly I think the government are being a little bit short-sighted in their approach, I mean they have certainly put in more money and it is wonderful, but the fact that they expect results and immediate results. I mean we fill out these forms every year, twice a year and we are supposed to say how many are employed, unemployed’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

‘I don’t think that people are down here for employment reasons. I think people are down there- one way because they’re being paid there on certain schemes and two because it’s something they always wanted to do or maybe they’re at

home with families that just gone out to school or are in school and they just want to improve themselves and maybe to help their children. I don't think they are down there, the majority I don't think are down there to go out to work'.

(Tutor)

'Yes, I would say probably now when we had the Celtic Tiger that there was so much employment that the people who were employable were employed. So the people who are unemployed and accessing a literacy scheme had major difficulties really and so it would take a long time them to come to a stage of being employed and really taking up programmes like the pre-employment programme where I feel they haven't got enough in the year by any means, they are still not employable and yet they are expected to be employable'.

(Tutor)

In relation to the ethos of the Literacy Service, respondents emphasised that a strong case needs to be made to the Government for continuing their holistic approach in providing adult Literacy Services in addition to their work in improving the basic skills of the workforce.

'As you talk about the holistic approach, I think perhaps people are losing sight of that there are other things other than accreditation other than employment, if people do improve and perhaps go on further but this seems to be their whole goal with the government that they become

employed as soon as they have done whatever programme or in fact quite a lot of times, we get the community welfare officer sending people down here to come and do literacy because they are on the books for too long and that is a very, very bad approach, I think. They never make good students for a start they're just not interested, they're pushed into it'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'Well I think the focus in literacy schemes would not be the same as the focus of the Department of Education's although if you look at the White Paper they do say, you know that it will improve, more people will be available for work and all that kind of stuff, they also actually say that it is for self development. I think that our main approach is student centred, we aim to give people what they want to help them to be able to do what they want to be able to do, but I feel students come in because they want to be able to fill out forms or they want to be able to write a letter themselves, or they want to be able to write a note to the teacher, whatever the particular things they ask about when they come in. As they progress and their aims change, and they realise that there is other stuff out there that they can do, and they move on and they do other things, their horizons are broadened ... a better horizon ... and as they are learning and they're realising what they can do, they actually do more and learn more, and I mean over the years we have introduced the Junior Cert and now we have the Leaving Cert but something that has come recently for me is for people who don't want accredited courses, putting on other classes or courses for people

who can follow who are not interested in getting a piece of paper, so I mean we can offer, we already have got spelling classes, creative writing class, personal development classes and I only have this in my head at the moment, it hasn't gone beyond that, but I am looking at maybe putting on classes like Literature, just looking at Literature, just for the sake of it and for the enjoyment of it and for the learning ...'

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

'Really they are being pushed to get people on. Pushed and pushed to do a cert saying NCVA Cert when it's really not appropriate. I think a lot of times the student does not want a cert but we are pushing them for a cert and sometimes I question the value of that, you sometimes are better off never having sat an exam than presenting an NCVA certificate to an employer'.

(Tutor)

'No, because your typical literacy student is still from (disadvantaged area) and is still covered in tattoos and will never be employed and will still have your full-scale Dublin accent and will never be employed except as a security man. Good, bad or indifferent. People that tend to go on from literacy schemes into further education will be people whose skills were pretty good and will have started off and may have missed school for medical reasons. They could be people who would have had meningitis or something as a child but peculiarly it's seen as a motivation, or it is given in literature as a motivation, improving employment

prospects - I don't ever remember having somebody come to a literacy scheme to improve their employment prospects. I don't think it's a motivation for students. The least significant, but it will certainly improve the employment prospects of the child of that person. I could be certain that without the parent being better educated doesn't affect the employment of the parent but it will affect the next generation and it will affect their - they won't be the security man or the cleaner. They'll be one step on the road'.

(Tutor)

The difficulty faced by parents with low literacy levels in assisting with their children's education. The latter issue was highlighted by a significant number of tutors as the main benefit for adult learners on literacy schemes. This would imply that the Literacy Service should develop closer contacts with schools in order to identify potential participants, both children at risk and their parents. Interaction and further cooperation with schools and mainstream education is recommended. Although, historically, the Literacy Service has been hesitant to work with mainstream education providers, there is also a need to break the cycle of low literacy levels. Initiatives such as the Family Literacy Programmes identify and work with children and parents with low literacy levels and should be initiated throughout the Literacy Service, in collaboration with local schools.

'They all say I want the best for my children- I'm here to help my children, I want my children to have what I didn't have. It's not that they lack the intelligence and their children are bursting with brains but that the

opportunities are out there for them and they want their children to take them. Ok, yeah because we keep talking about this cycle of disadvantage where people with a very low standard of education skills will transfer onto their children. It just seems to be the one big thing. Well I think if adults are coming back to re-educate themselves all it is saying to their children is that education is important and it's the people who aren't coming back to re-educate themselves that are saying to their children education is nothing. The people that are with us believe in education and know that it's the way forward and that's what they want for their children'.

(Tutor)

'That's the one thing they'll tell you they are delighted that they can help kids with homework and that they get to the stage where they can help them, without worrying whether they are going it right or wrong'.

(Tutor)

'I would say that is the main benefit of adult education to society; it's with the next generation. The people I have taught will still be a waitress in Bewleys but their child who would have been, had they not gone back themselves, an early school leaver will have at least an a junior certificate and perhaps a leaving cert. I have had women with children, older children left leaving school with no qualifications. Once they come to adult education it is very rare they allow the younger children to

leave. It's that the parent realises that this has a benefit and will not allow them'.

(Tutor)

'Absolutely and then the fact of where they are and the things that are coming up that arrive, things that have been talked about, they are more aware of what's out there for their kids, rather ... they hear about things and they hear other people on the programme talking about maybe bringing their kids to the theatre ... ideas ... absolutely'.

(Tutor)

'It's very satisfying for a parent to be able to identify with their younger, say youngish parents and with all of their children going to school. They talk of the Junior Cert and this mother has done her Junior Cert, she knows what they are talking about in English. She can sit down and look at their English paper with them. There's nothing more satisfying for that parent to be able to do that and she wouldn't really know, I mean unless she had gone and done it she wouldn't have known, she wouldn't know drama, she wouldn't know about her media questions. Now she can't do it in the other subjects but she'd be able to do it with one. The education makes them intent on having their kids continue'.

(Tutor)

Table 6.14.1 Benefits Experienced By Learners

Learner Benefits	Improvement in employment	Count	111
		Column	11.6
		%	
	Increased self-confidence	Count	378
		Column	39.6
		%	
	Participation in other learning activities	Count	196
		Column	20.5
		%	
	More involvement in local community	Count	101
		Column	10.6
		%	
	Greater participation in child/children's education	Count	147
		Column	15.4
		%	
	Other benefits	Count	22
		Column	2.3
		%	

6.15.**Occupation of Tutors**

The survey gathered data on the employment status of adult literacy tutors. Results indicated that at least half of the respondent tutors were working. The remainder were occupied at home either caring for young children or with household duties. A small number were retired or had left employment and had the means to devote spare hours to volunteer activities.

Table 6.15.1 Occupation of Tutors

Occupation	Full time paid work	Count	112
		Column %	23.4
	Unemployed	Count	6
		Column %	1.3
	Retired	Count	85
		Column %	17.7
	Voluntary work	Count	40
		Column %	8.4
	Part time paid work	Count	163
		Column %	34.0
	Working at home (fulltime)	Count	59
		Column %	12.3
	Student	Count	14
		Column %	2.9

6.16

Prior Experience

Very few volunteers therefore entered into adult basic education tutoring with no background experience. It is difficult to assess just how valuable their prior experiences are as they are based on self-perceived judgements. Nonetheless the types of experience shown above are reasonable enough as a general guide. The details of the nature of the tutors' experience of teaching before engaging in literacy work was very relevant. This was approached in two ways: by seeking details of their specific teaching activities and by casting wider with a question asking them if they considered their job experiences relevant to adult literacy work.

Table 6.16.1 Prior Experience

Experience	Teaching children to read/write/spell	Count	237
		Column	38.7
		%	
	Teaching adults to read/write/spell	Count	33
		Column	5.4
		%	
	Formal teaching of any kind	Count	160
		Column	26.1
		%	
	Helping people with learning difficulties	Count	93
		Column	15.2
		%	
	Any jobs which have been useful in basic education	Count	90
		Column	14.7
		%	

Interest in Increasing Tutoring Hours**Table 6.17.1****Interest in Increasing Tutoring Hours**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	156	36.4	37.9
No	256	59.8	62.1
No Answer	16	3.7	
	428	100	100

However, the question of whether they would be prepared to increase their commitment received a lukewarm response. Just 37.9% indicated that they would be willing to increase the amount of tutoring that they do. The remaining were not prepared to expand their tutoring involvement. Many of the survey participants indicated that they were already at breaking point; it was unlikely that these tutors would increase the number of hours devoted to their literacy scheme.

‘I couldn’t increase too much more of my hours, in fact at the end unless the terms and conditions become better because at the end of the week it doesn’t pay me, it really doesn’t pay me so em unless the terms and conditions improve you will never keep a cohort of teachers’.

(Tutor)

6.18**Providing Other Help for Students**

63.3% of tutors indicated that they had help their students in ways other than literacy tutoring. This further emphasises the holistic nature of the service. Activities undertaken included:

'Filling forms - help with social welfare problems'

'Helping people to write letters, i.e. personal, social welfare etc'

'Helped people apply for social welfare entitlements , did out their cv's and applied for jobs'

'Helped with mathematical skills specific to students job'

'Helped with understanding financial matters e.g. Mortgage + credit union business'

'Learning to drive'

'Provided a listening ear to personal problems. Used my personal knowledge to give encouragement and advice'

'Helped with family problems, financial problems, encouragement and support. Helped to boost self-image'

Table 6.18.1**Providing Other Help for Students**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	252	58.9	63.3
No	146	34.1	36.7
No Answer	30	7.0	
	428	100	100

This provision of non-tutoring help was confirmed in the interview process:

‘Well with personal problems and em health issues sometimes, issues around families in a counselling sense and sometimes even financially’.

(Tutor)

Adult Literacy Organisers were in agreement with how common this was among their tutors but they were felt that when this help developed into the personal domain that tutors should maintain a professional relationship and to that aim it was suggested that more training on tutor boundaries should take place.

‘I feel that tutors should not get involved, it’s a cause of upset to them and they get stressed and students become totally dependent and they’re not doing what they came to do, so we do a session around that during tutor training. We have a counsellor here who comes one full day a week and students can avail of that at any time’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

However, not all tutors were in agreement:

‘I think that’s the new political correctness but I think actually if we do that we actually take out an essential ingredient. I think there is always a tendency especially in one to one. It’s a dangerous area because you can become over involved but in saying that if you saw somebody drowning in the Liffey, like if you were trained to walk by then you will walk by. Sometimes you have to stick your hand in and get somebody out. I think it's an issue where a tutor should be

left to make up their own mind because we are dealing with very vulnerable people and by the nature of the people they are being trained doing literacy tutoring they are altruistic by nature and I think sometimes eh that there needs to be, rather than training people in boundaries, there needs to be a support service that we can refer our students to ourselves. We need an advocacy service or a professional advocate, we're not social workers'

(Tutor)

6.19. Improvements on scheme

Weaknesses highlighted by the respondent tutors included:

Inadequate space for tuition within Literacy Schemes, the limited opening hours of the Literacy Schemes, in terms of the lack of tuition from June to September and also the limited availability of tuition in the evenings and at the weekends. It was generally believed that two hours of tuition per week is not sufficient to progress literacy skills. Respondents noted that greater flexibility, in terms of time and duration of tuition would allow more participants to avail of the service. More ongoing training was highlighted, as the most significant improvement require by the questionnaire respondents. This has been dealt with previously in the chapter.

'The access to rooms the competition for rooms eh...is where the difficulty is during the day. Now I think it's ok at night. But certainly the fee paying students seem or fee paying groups seems constantly to be taking priority which

is a problem and we are back to certification, we're back to an accountant of thought. You pay, you're of more value? They're more entitled to a room. Why would you need a one to one filling up a room where we could have 10 people? That attitude, yeah. So it's not the accommodation up there, it's fine. I can see the pressure all the time'.

(Tutor)

Table 6.19.1 Improvements on scheme

Improved premises	Count	147
	Column %	19.8
Increased teaching resources	Count	174
	Column %	23.5
Full time tutors	Count	161
	Column %	21.7
More ongoing training	Count	226
	Column %	30.5
Other improvements	Count	34
	Column %	4.6

- **Valuing the Literacy Workforce**

In terms of valuing and coordinating the volunteer input into the Literacy Service, the development of a volunteer policy was highlighted as necessary. This would improve the longevity of volunteer involvement and would improve the coordination of the volunteer input into the Literacy Service. Further support and inservice training for tutors, both voluntary and paid, was also deemed important, as was the development of career paths for tutors.

The perception generally Adult Literacy Tutors aren't valued and treated with the respect they deserve was raised as a shortcoming in the service, with the recommendation that proper structure and career paths should be available to those who want them. There should be more support and career structures available to literacy tutors and the current working structure should be further developed to provide long-term contracts and security of employment for tutors. The development of such structures should result in a more secure and permanent workforce.

'I was at a meeting with our adult education organiser – we were told we were so much luckier than the cleaner who was only getting 7 euro an hour - we were linked. It's a crazy situation. It is a professional job but this comes the attitude from this idea that because you volunteer you have nothing better to do and you

in fact are eh a needy person who has nothing better to do than to come down and teach a few people and it comes from within the service that there is this idea that there's that the volunteer or anybody that came from the volunteer end is a lesser being somebody would come in with a teaching qualification and would have "real teaching experience".

(Tutor)

'There's a conflict really in a certain sense because for the poor devils that want to make a career out of it at the moment there is no career structure – it's dreadful because I see tutors there and they are working very very hard ...there's no summer pay and they are being asked to go to meetings and they are not getting paid to attend meetings'.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

- **Threats to Holistic Nature**

A concern of staff throughout the Literacy Service was that the holistic nature of literacy would be lost in the future development of the Literacy Service. Within each Literacy Scheme there is a learner-centred, adult friendly, relaxed environment, which complement the holistic approach taken to the tuition itself. Respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining this atmosphere within the service.

'They would move away from the ethos and I see that happening now and I think it's a very bad way to go because I do think there's a difference em in

approach and I think you can't have a system that is suitable for children imposed on adults'.

(Tutor)

- **Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

The provision of literacy tuition and ESL to refugees and asylum seekers was an issue that arose during the course of the research. Respondents felt that they were providing tuition with no clear policy guidance from the Government. In response to this the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) have recently released a policy statement relating to asylum seekers and refugees and their entitlements in terms of education. However, it is felt that schemes and staff require more assistance and support in meeting the emerging literacy and ESL needs of non-nationals. Furthermore, feedback would suggest the need for assistance and additional training for tutors in providing tuition to non-nationals e.g. to assist tutors in differentiating between those who require ESL and those who may have literacy difficulties in their mother tongue, etc. The lack of policy for minority groups was highlighted as an important issue, with tutors feeling that they had no real expertise or guidance in tutoring participants from different cultural backgrounds.

'The Department of Education and the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness didn't know what to do with the refugees so they dumped them into the literacy schemes with no resources, no skills, no nothing. Nala's taking it on and nala is

saying that literacy is the same as language acquisition and its not and we should have said no’.

(Adult Literacy Organiser)

6.21

Conclusion

Chapter 6 outlines the main findings from the tutor survey and follow up interviews. It provides a profile of ABE practitioners and overview of the current organisation of the ABE service. The chapter also explores and gives insight into priority issues for the service.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Introduction

This dissertation thoroughly details the need for more information on many aspects of the organisation of the literacy service in the Republic of Ireland. While a comprehensive profile of tutors surveyed and interviewed is presented the study, in essence, raises more questions than it answers. On reflection its most important contribution may be that it points out many gaps in existing information and puts forward questions that ought to be answered as well as areas that need to be further explored. This is significant, as no comparable study has been conducted on the area of ABE in the Republic of Ireland. The impression created is of a service hampered by years of state neglect and under funding. The level of support of this sector has been completely out of sync with the importance of literacy skills, both for the general population and also in individual lives. The IALS (OECD, 1997) findings highlighted high literacy difficulties among the general population, yet the service receives just 2% of the education budget annually (Bailey, 1999). Literacy and numeracy competence is perceived by the Irish government to be critical to the whole notion of lifelong learning. Therefore knowledge of literacy and numeracy practices and associated issues of provision are concerns for all stakeholders.

The literacy service is currently undergoing a period of considerable change and development (NALA, 2002). Throughout the research process, concern was expressed at the pace of this change and its implications for the future of the Literacy Service, particularly in terms of the expansion of the service; its ethos and the changing perceptions of accreditation of participants. It must be recognised that these issues need to be addressed in the future plans of the service.

The 33 VEC's operate their literacy schemes in accordance with a broad set of guidelines (NALA, 2002). The findings of this research indicates that there can be considerable differences between VEC's - and between schemes in a VEC - in terms of their organisational approach, especially with regard to the resourcing and provision of in-service training. This is symptomatic of the lack of a coherent policy framework for ABE in Ireland.

7.2.

Training Needs of ABE Tutors

The expansion of the Adult Literacy Service is giving rise to greater training needs among Adult Literacy Organisers and literacy tutors. These needs arise from the growing scale of the service and from anticipated developments in the scope of the service (NALA, 2002). Since the quality of the Literacy Service is critically dependent on the quality of those responsible for its provision, the training of adult literacy practitioners is a priority (NALA, 2002). Indeed with the increased official emphasis on lifelong learning there has been a realisation that not even a very

comprehensive initial education programme can equip an educator with all the skills and knowledge that will be required throughout a teaching career. Nyiri (1997) highlights that a relationship exists between lifelong learning and the development of teacher effectiveness. McNaughton (1999, pg.19) states that ‘arguably one of the best and necessary ways of making lifelong learning a reality is to develop an effective, well trained cadre of teaching/learning volunteers’. There is very little indication that a lifelong learning for educators of any type is being dealt with at any serious level in Ireland, and what evidence there is appears to be aspirational rather than contributing to a coherent vision. It is improbable to suggest that lifelong learning for educators will develop into an exact science. However, even limited success in this sphere necessitates a form of strategic planning with a futuristic and long-term view that adequately deals with increasing intricacies in the education system while not being beleaguered by them. Lifelong learning for teachers requires flexibility, planning, infrastructure, resources, and coherence, as well as much more attention by policy-makers than it currently enjoys.

This is especially true for adult basic educators. The service has taken a piecemeal approach to inservice provision and this approach must be remedied. As an initial step, research needs to be carried out in order to define the scale of FE in Ireland. Otherwise, between course providers, trainers and participants there will continue to be a lack of structure or permanence and no sense of fitting into an overall picture of educational opportunity. In-service training programmes must be responsive to the dynamics of literacy education and the changing needs of literacy practitioners, the Literacy Service and society. Training activities should therefore be evaluated for

relevance and impact, and monitored for quality. Research and development are also required to ensure that the available range of activities are appropriate to future needs, that the objectives of in-service programmes are being met, and to investigate specific issues of concern - for example, why some tutors never participate, or the sources and extent of regional differences in training needs.

There is a clearly recognised need for staff training within the ABE sector and in several instances there is general agreement on the aspects of training that need to be addressed. However, the exact nature of this training and the best mode of delivery seems very dependent on the type and size of centre, the conditions of employment for staff and the proximity or otherwise to training providers such as universities and Institutes of Technology. Adult Literacy Organisers highlight the lack of motivation amongst some staff members to involve themselves in training because of the uncertainty of tenure of their employment and the fact that they may have hours in two or more centres. This is seen as a major disincentive to further training.

The level of training varies widely from centre to centre. Some may be trained in their own specific subject field but have no training in education. Those who have training in the education field may be trained to work with younger children or adolescents. Interviewees emphasise the difference between mainstream teaching and the facilitation of adult learners. A common theme running through the interviews was the need to train staff to become facilitators of adult learning and to have the skills to help students to manage their own learning. While training

cannot be seen as a panacea for all the ills of the sector, it does seem clear that a coordinated approach would benefit all the key stakeholders.

Adult Literacy Organisers report that both they themselves and their staffs 'have clear training deficits which require attention'. Large numbers of tutors have no formal teacher/trainer qualifications and it is overwhelmingly agreed that such qualifications are a necessity to allow them to carry out the task effectively. Moreover, it is quite clear that the type of work undertaken in Adult Basic Education requires specialised training programmes, since the range of skills and indeed the philosophy at the heart of adult education is not remotely similar to those of 'mainstream' education.

Tutors require additional support through the provision of on-going, inservice training. Tutors mentioned a number of inservice days that they had found to be interesting and informative. Another suggestion to improve the support structures available to tutors was for the Literacy Service to encourage experienced tutors to share their knowledge with less experienced tutors, e.g. by recommending certain materials, etc, it was suggested that a mentoring system could be developed to this end.

It was pointed out by ALO'S that their job specification has evolved so much that they are often unable to meet the demands required of them. Indeed, it was suggested that the training role should not be part of their brief. To this end, it is

necessary for each VEC region to employ a Tutor Trainer who would be responsible for the training needs within their particular geographic area.

The tutor trainer would take on the job of coordinating in-service training at scheme / VEC level. This person would have to gain an appreciation of how the delivery mechanism works and would be in a position, on the basis of training, to inform ALOs and tutors of the likely availability of appropriate courses and the terms and conditions attached to taking such courses.

The tutor trainer would conduct the periodic needs assessment of tutors and would compile the training plan for the schemes within his or her VEC area. The appointment of a training coordinator / tutor trainer for each VEC is a priority in the context of the proposed in-service training strategy. In the interim period, until such appointments are made, some support will need to be provided to ALOs to enable them to implement the training strategy. A possible solution would be to assign this task to an experienced paid tutor. This could only be done if the tuition contact hours of the person in question were reduced and the time reallocated to the task of inservice training planning and coordination.

In recent years staff in the adult literacy sector have been provided with a new training initiative – NALA/WIT. Reference was made in the interviews to the courses that have been developed in this initiative. There was general agreement on the merit of these courses. There was also much praise for the standard of the

courses on offer and the opportunity they afforded to meet with others working in similar settings. Those who attended the courses were at times overwhelmed by the amount of work and study in addition to working a normal week but they felt that they were positive in their overall response to such training interventions

As already pointed out, many of the staff within the ABE sector work on a part-time or voluntary basis and may not have the incentive to take up a course of study that may take up to six years to complete. There is no guarantee at the end of the course that employment prospects will have improved. The situation is made more problematic because of the poor profile of the sector within the wider field of education and the perception that there is little hope of permanent employment.

There is a feeling that far from removing some of the barriers that exist within the ABE sector the current training provision may exacerbate an already difficult situation. Those interviewed showed great concern at the lack of recognition from the Department of Education and Science of the current courses. The irony of this situation is highlighted in the responses. The courses are well-funded and well run but are not recognised for qualification purposes or for permanency within the sector.

Another anomaly highlighted by the research was the fact that most of the courses currently available are offered only to Certificate or Diploma level. There was a strong call to bring such courses to degree level and to give them proper

recognition. In their responses tutors were particularly categorical concerning the idea that a teaching / training qualification should be required for formal recognition as an educator in the FE field and almost equally positive that such a qualification should be clearly defined and made available nationally on an in-service basis to all FE educators. There is a need for formal recognition of teaching/training courses in further and adult education for qualified teacher/trainer status in further and adult education. This need is one of high priority. This should be done in the context of defining nationally what constitutes adequate professional teaching / training qualifications in further and adult education.

Practical improvements to existing training structures were also recommended. Many of the courses are inaccessible as they operate within cities such as Limerick, Galway and Dublin. There was a call to make the training more accessible by offering on-line course modules, distance learning or outreach training. The timing of such courses during work time also acted as a disincentive for many people as they often lost out on salary in order to attend. The suggestion that the location and timing of courses be negotiated with prospective students would be a concrete example of putting the principles of adult learning into practice. Another such concession would be the recognition of previous qualifications and experience or accreditation of prior learning. The research also identified the need for a more flexible, modular approach to training and a wide range of assessment procedures. There was a call for the principles of adult education to be applied to the training of adult educators. Although there is a

problem with the diversity of the ABE sector and hence the varying needs for training of the educators in it, there is one common theme in all ABE educator training. This is, that the participants are all at post-compulsory level. Hence the training of the educators can have as a common theme the ethos of learner-directed, person-centered education.

Significant proposals are mentioned in the White Paper in the area of Further Education training provision. These proposals suggest a blueprint for the type of structures required to facilitate training of trainers on a much wider scale. The data in this dissertation represents not only a further proof of the extensive need for training but also a clear signpost as to the appropriate level, quality, philosophy, content and methodology which such training must embody in order to be effective. If these two initiatives can be brought together and a sense of urgency added to the mix it is possible to foresee a relatively rapid growth of training in the Further and Adult Education sector. The needs have been clearly identified, the required response clearly spelled out, and all that remains is action.

7.3.

Valuing the ABE Workforce

In terms of valuing and managing the volunteer input into the Literacy Service, the development of a volunteer policy was highlighted as necessary. This would improve the longevity of volunteer involvement and would improve the coordination of the volunteer input into the Literacy Service. Further support and inservice training for tutors, both voluntary and paid, was also deemed important,

as was the development of career paths for tutors. The perception generally that Adult Literacy Tutors aren't valued and treated with the respect they deserve was raised as a shortcoming in the service, with the recommendation that proper structure and career paths should be available to those who want them. There should be more support and career structures available to literacy tutors and the current working structure should be further developed to provide long-term contracts and security of employment for tutors. The development of such structures should result in a more secure and permanent workforce.

7.4.

Focus of ABE Sector

Staff felt that The Department of Education and Science were currently emphasising the importance of literacy skills in improving employment chances and that the holistic, learner-centred approach was currently under threat. There was fear expressed that increased funding, the increased emphasis on student accreditation and the pressure to improve workplace skills would result in a neglect of the personal development aspects of literacy provision. These concerns need to be addressed by the Literacy Service. The service is currently on the threshold of considerable change and there is a need to address the apprehension of staff in approaching that change.

It became clear from the outset that the Adult Literacy Organisers and Tutors were strongly committed to their centres and to the community of staff and students that make up these centres. The ALO's are unequivocal in their vision of the centres as

places where people are encouraged to grow and develop both on an academic level but also on a personal level. Strong emphasis is placed on the caring and sharing nature of the ethos, which is encouraged across the range of centres. Time and again reference was made to the development of personal effectiveness and the growth in self-esteem. Respondents emphasised that a strong case needs to be made to the Government for continuing their holistic approach in providing adult Literacy Services in addition to their work in improving the basic skills of the workforce.

Bailey and Coleman (1998) discovered that adult learners in basic education schemes were determined that their children would not experience similar difficulties and thus became very involved in their children's education. In the survey results 34% of tutors stated that their students now played a greater part in their children's education. This highlights the importance of ABE provision as it breaks the cycle of disadvantage with regard to literacy. A major issue that arose in the feedback were the problems faced by parents with low literacy levels in assisting with their children's education. The former issue was highlighted by a significant number of tutors as the main benefit for adult learners on literacy schemes. Parents' attitudes about education improve; the value they perceive in education increases. Adults facing such stresses are often less able to support their children's learning. Children who lack parental support for their learning are likely to do less well at school and to gain fewer qualifications. Children do not live and learn in isolation, spending more time within other environments than they do at school - less than 18% of a child's term-time week is spent in school. The tremendous potential resource we have in adults and parents should not be

underestimated. Providing support for adults to learn and to become confident in their own ability to learn gives us access to enormously powerful agents for positive change. If we invest in the development of adults so that they become confident and competent learners, they are able not only to use these skills to the benefit of the economy and their local communities, but also to provide support and encouragement for their children's learning. It is difficult to provide support if you lack confidence in your own abilities and have failed so far to reap any rewards from the education system.

Changes in the environment of families and in their quality of life can be brought about through encouraging the adults to learn new skills. A focus on the learning needs of the adults develops confidence in their ability to learn. This confidence will in turn help them to support their children's learning.

This would imply that the Literacy Service should develop closer contacts with schools in order to identify potential participants, both children at risk and their parents. Interaction and further cooperation with schools and mainstream education is recommended. Although, historically, the Literacy Service has been hesitant to work with mainstream education providers, there is also a need to break the cycle of low literacy levels. Initiatives such as the Family Literacy Programmes identify and work with children and parents with low literacy levels and should be initiated throughout the Literacy Service, in collaboration with local schools.

Fingeret (1988) and Kazemek (1988) dispute the continuing link that is established between literacy levels and economic development as this places the blame for the nation's economic difficulties on adults with low literacy levels. The link ignores the fact that 'structural inequalities such as unemployment are built into our social and economic systems' (Kazemek 1988, p.473)

Kazemek also argues that this narrow focus on the economic benefits of literacy ignores that the main goal should be 'the liberation of people for intelligent, meaningful and humane action upon the world' (p.466). Fingeret (1988) also points out that studies in the United States highlight that the majority of adult learners enrol in ABE courses for educational rather than employment reasons. The literature review outlines numerous studies, which indicate that the economic focus of lifelong learning espoused by many international governments, including the Irish government, may be flawed. There is a need for this focus to be thoroughly re-examined.

7.5.

Research and Development

This dissertation methodically documents the need for additional information on various aspects of the organisation of the ABE sector in the Republic of Ireland. It must therefore conclude with a list of questions that must be examined in future research. The questions are based on information needs identified in the report. In essence this study raises more questions than it answers. This dissertation thoroughly

outlines the need for more information on various aspects of the literacy service in the Republic of Ireland. The following questions are based on information needs outlined in the study and are a reflection of the dearth of research in this area.

- **Student Retention**

What percentage of students drop out of a literacy scheme?

Is there a follow-up procedure established for those students who do not continue?

- **Tutor Retention**

How long do tutors remain with literacy schemes?

Do paid tutors remain longer than volunteer tutors?

Why do they leave?

What happens to students when their tutor leaves? Do they also leave?

What factors are major motivations in getting and retaining tutors?

What employment conditions and working environments support the development of effective ABE tutors?

- **Tutor Qualifications and Training**

What should the qualifications for tutors be?

What types of Preservice courses best prepare ABE tutors?

What is the relationship between staff training and both programme quality and learner achievement?

Most of the literature on the adequacy of training claims that existing training for adult basic education tutors is glaringly inadequate for the job of teaching adults

basic literacy skills. In the context of the Republic of Ireland there is little research-based data to support or contradict this claim.

- **Evaluation**

What are the effects of attending adult basic education classes?

How do tutors evaluate their students' progress?

To what extent do students meet their goals?

7.6 Main Research Findings

In conclusion, the main findings of the dissertation are:

- ABE is clearly an important starting point on the path to lifelong learning. 46% of tutors stated that their students participated in other learning activities since joining the ABE class. It is therefore an area where significant funding ought to be targeted in order that the socially excluded in our society are enabled to rejoin the lifelong learning path.
- Bailey and Coleman (1998) discovered that adult learners in basic education schemes were determined that their children would not experience similar difficulties and thus became very involved in their children's education. In the survey results 34% of tutors stated that their students now played a greater part in their children's education. This highlights the importance of ABE provision as it breaks the cycle of disadvantage with regard to literacy.

- The primary significance of lifelong learning is clearly defined in terms of employment and the economy. This needs to be further examined as there is little empirical data that highlights the efficacy of education and training as a cure for economic problems (Edwards et al, 1998). In the survey of tutors only 26% indicated that their students improved their employment as a result of ABE. Indeed the most significant benefits were that participants significantly increased in confidence and participated in other learning activities as well as playing a greater part in their children's education. This would indicate that the current over reliance on the economic benefits is certainly questionable.
- The vast majority of tutors in ABE schemes work on a voluntary basis with a minority being paid on a part time basis. This presents many difficulties with regard to training and inservice development. Even when part timers and volunteers are willing to be involved in their professional development as adult basic education tutors, many simply lack the time. If adult literacy education is worth doing, it is worth doing well. This requires a well trained, well paid, professional workforce. To this end, the over reliance on part time teachers and volunteers is anathema.
- Bailey and Coleman (1998) highlighted that the adult learners interviewed for the purpose of their study were in general agreement about tutor training. It was their opinion that 'tutors must be specially trained to teach adults; they must be able to encourage the learners and build self esteem; and they must

listen to the learners needs and be flexible enough to respond to them'. While 93% of tutors had received initial tutor training this was usually of 20 hours duration and non-accredited which is significantly lower than the training provided in the other sectors of education. ABE tutor training should give tutors expertise in, the process of adult education, i.e. how adults learn and how best a practitioner may contribute towards their development so that adult learners are provided with the best possible outcomes. The White Paper (DES, 2000) envisaged a system in the future whereby practitioners of adult education will be trained to third level, professional standard. Nearly 90% of tutors felt that an accredited cert or diploma should be available to all with 62% expressing an interest in studying for such a course. This highlights the commitment to lifelong learning that the majority of ABE practitioners have, which is not being supported by existing government policy.

- The majority of ABE tutors in the survey had two years or less experience. A sizeable minority had eight or more years experience. Therefore, it appears that once tutors get over the initial hurdle they remain. Elsey and Gibbs (1981) highlight that voluntary tutors often leave schemes before they are experienced enough to be useful (p.9). This is extremely important to examine in order that the sector has an experienced cohort of tutors. 'Adults are almost all voluntary learners, and they simply disappear from learning experiences that don't satisfy them'. (Knowles, 1996, p.83). This is also true for volunteer tutors in ABE schemes. They are participating in the field of lifelong learning. They are to some extent, still learning and must also be

provided with satisfactory learning experiences. The Green Paper on Adult Education (DES, 1998) states that the education ‘tutor becomes a co-learner’. Therefore it is imperative that support should also be provided for these learners in line with support available to all other adult learners. In-service and pre-service training undoubtedly must form part of this support. While the majority of tutors surveyed have received at least some in-service many who didn’t avail of this training felt that the times were unsuitable, they were too busy or didn’t need training. Therefore, greater flexibility in providing in-service training seems necessary and more attention to practitioners’ individual development seems appropriate if they are not to be worn out by the immediacy of the “daily grind” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Also the Government has projected significant increases in the numbers of learners who can be catered for. Should the high dropout continue there appears to be little chance of such numbers being catered for. In the survey only 36% are prepared to increase the amount of tutoring they do. It would appear that providing a more permanent career structure would attract tutors who could facilitate this increase.

7.7

Conclusion

In this chapter, the main findings of the dissertation are presented. From what is discovered from the survey, interviews, literature review and policy critique an attempt is made to make recommendations for future development and future areas of research in the Irish context.

Bibliography

Abrahamsson, K. (1996). Concepts, Organization and Current Trends of Lifelong Education in Sweden. In R. Edwards, A. Hanson and P. Raggat (Eds.), *Boundaries of Adult Learning* (pp.169-182). London: Routledge / Open University.

Alden, H. (1982). *Illiteracy and Poverty in Canada: Towards a Critical Perspective*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Toronto.

Anderson, G (1998). *Fundamentals of Educational Research* (2nd ed.). London: Falmer Press.

Aontas (1999). *Aontas Annual Report 1999*. Dublin: AONTAS.

Armitage, R. (1998). *How the press influences the publics understanding of forensic science*. Unpublished MSc Dissertation, University of Glamorgan.

Bailey, I. (1999). One in Four - The People Behind The Statistics (A Response to Mark Morgan). In O. O'Leary (Ed.), *Issues in Education (Volume 4): 2020 - A Vision for Education in the 21st Century* (pp. 13-21). Dublin: ASTI.

Bailey, I. and Coleman, U. (1998). *Access and Participation in Adult Literacy Schemes*. Dublin: NALA.

Bane, L. (1996, December 4). The Importance of Adults Learning. *Irish Independent Lifelong Learning Supplement*, p.7.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton and R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated literacy: Reading and writing in context*. London: Routledge.

Basset, M., Brady, B , Fleming,T. and Inglis, T. (1989). *For Adults Only - A Case For Adult Education in Ireland*. Dublin: Aontas.

Beder, H. (1991). *Adult Literacy, Issues for Policy and Practice*. Florida: Kreiger.

Bell, J. (1993). *Doing Your Research Project - A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bell, J. (1995). *Doing Your Research Project - A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Berg, I. (1970). *Education & jobs : the great training robbery*. Penguin: London.

Bogdan R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Brady, B. and McCauley, F. (1999). *Making an Impact: the Aontas Response to the Green Paper 'Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning*. Dublin: Aontas.

Braverman, H. (1976). *Labor and Monopoly Capital: the degradation of work in the twentieth century*. New York: Monthly Review.

Bryman, A. (1988). *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Burns, R. (2000). *Introduction to Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Bynner, J. and Stribley, K. M. (Eds.), (1978). *Social Research, Principles and Procedures*. London: Longman.

Castleton, G. & McDonald, M. (2002). *(Re)positioning adult literacy and numeracy in Australia's social and economic wellbeing*. Melbourne: ALNARC.

Chadwick, A. (1991). Some Current Issues in the Training of Adult Educators. In P. Jarvis and A. Chadwick (Eds.), *Training Adult Educators in Western Europe* (pp.207-218). London: Routledge.

Charnley, A.H. and Jones, H.A. (1981). *The Concept of Success in Adult Literacy*. London: ALBSU.

Ciancone, T. (1988). *Adult Numeracy: Taking Mathematics from the Real World into the Classroom and Back: A Report to the Adult Basic Education Unit*. Toronto: Board of Education.

Coolahan, J. (ed.), (1994). *Report on the National Education Convention*. Dublin: Government Stationery Office.

Coombs, P. (1985). *The World Crisis in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Council of Europe (1978). *Adult Literacy Resource Agency of the United Kingdom*. Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Cooperation.

Cropley, A.J. and Knapper, C.K. (1983). Higher education and the promotion of lifelong learning. *Studies in Higher Education*, 8, pp.15-21.

D'Amico, C. & Judy, R. (1997). *Workforce 2020: Work and workers in the 21st century*. Indianapolis: Hudson Institute.

Dave, R. H. (1973). *Lifelong Education and School Curriculum*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

Dave, R. (Ed.), (1976). *Foundations of lifelong education*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Day, C. (1993). *Research and the continuing professional development of teachers.*

An inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Nottingham School of Education.

Day, C. (1996). Lifelong learning and teacher education. In C. Day (Ed.) *Comment: lifelong learning for people in Europe*, 18, pp. 2-8.

Department of Education (1985). *Adult Education in Disadvantaged Areas: Part 1-Adult Literacy.* Dublin: Dept. of Education.

Department of Education (1995). *Charting Our Education Future : White Paper on Education.* Dublin: Government Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (1998). *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning: Green Paper on Adult Education.* Dublin: Government Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (2000). *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education.* Dublin: Government Stationery Office.

De Valera, S. (2003, February 1). *Speech: 2003 National Forum for Literacy Tutors In The Ashling Hotel, Dublin.*

http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?maincat=10861&category=10861&feature=archive_speeches§ionpage=13637&language=EN&link=link001&page=2&doc=16208 (checked 12-July-2003).

Duke, C. (1976). Australian Perspectives on Lifelong Education, *Australian Education Review*, No. 6. Hawthorn: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Du Vivier, E. (1992). *Learning to be Literate, A Study of Students Perceptions*. Dublin: Dublin Literacy Scheme.

Edwards, R., Raggatt, P., Harrison, R., McCollum, A. and J. Calder (1998). *Recent Thinking In Lifelong Learning*. Norwich: The Open University / Department for Education and Employment. HMSO.

Elsy, B. (1980). Volunteer tutors in adult education. *Studies in Adult Education*, 12, no 2, Oct 1980, pp. 134-142.

Elsy, B. and Gibbs, M. (1981) *Voluntary Tutors in Adult Literacy: A Survey of Adult Literacy Volunteers in the Nottingham Area*. University of Nottingham: Department of Adult Education.

European Commission (1996). *Strategy For Lifelong Learning*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Commission.

Eurydice, the Information Network on Education in Europe, (2000). *Lifelong Learning: the contribution of education systems in member states of the European Union*. Brussels: Eurydice.

Faulkner, D., Swann, J., Baker, S., Bird, M. & Carty, J. (1991). *Professional Development in Action Methodology Handbook*. Milton Keynes: The Open University.

Faure, E., Herrera, F., Kaddoura, A.R., Petrovsky, A., Rahnenla, M. & Ward, F. (1972). *Learning to be: the world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris: UNESCO International.

Field, J. (1996). Lifelong Learning in Europe. *Adults Learning* vol. 7, no.6, pp.131-132.

Fingeret, A. (1988). *The Politics of Adult Literacy Education*. Paper presented at the National Urban Literacy Conference, Washington, DC, January 22, 1988. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 292 053).

Fisher, B. (2001). Teaching Literacy for Lifelong Learning: A New Look. *Journal of Correctional Education*, Volume 52, Issue 2, pp. 58-61.

http://www.easternlincs.org/correctional_education/articles/literacy-lifelong-fisher.pdf (checked 12-July-2003).

Freire, P. (1970) *.Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.

Freynt, P. (1991). Literacy Provision in Europe. In *Literacy Initiatives - Proceedings of a Conference Organised by the City of Dublin Vocational Education*

Committee (pp. 6-8). Dublin: Curriculum Development Unit.

Fullan, M. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Cassell.

Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (1992) *Understanding Teacher Development*. London: Cassell.

Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (1991). *Research Methods for Managers*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Gray, W. (1956). *The teaching of reading and writing*. Paris: UNESCO.

Hager, P. and Gonczi, A. (1996). Professions and Competencies. In R. Edwards, A. Hanson and P. Raggat (Eds.) *Boundaries of Adult Learning* (pp. 246-260). London: Routledge / Open University.

Halliday, J. (1999). *Lifelong Learning and the World of Work*. Paper presented at the European conference on Educational Research, Lahti, Finland, 22-25 September, 1999. *Education-Line* <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000001142.html> (checked 12-July-2003).

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*. London: Cassell.

Harris, R. (1999). Lifelong learning in work contexts. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 4(2), pp. 161-183.

Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review: releasing the social science research imagination*. London: Sage Publications.

Hart, M. (1996). Educating Cheap Labour. In P. Raggat, R. Edwards and N. Small (Eds.) *The Learning Society, Challenges and Trends* (pp. 96-111). London: Routledge / Open University.

Heath, S. (1986). Critical factors in literacy development. In S. De Castell, L. Allan and K. Egan (Eds.), *Literacy, society, and schooling: A reader*. Revision of papers originally presented at a conference on the topic "Literacy: what is to be done?" held at Simon Fraser University. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Heinemann, K. (1991). Education and the internal market. *European Education*, 23 (2), pp. 69-76.

Hull, G. A. (1997). *Changing work, changing workers: Critical perspectives on language, literacy, and skills*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Hunter, C.S. and Harman, D. (1979). *Adult Literacy in the United States*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Illich, I. and Verne, E. (1976). *Imprisoned in the global classroom*. London : Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative.

ILO (2000). *Conclusions of Joint Meeting on Lifelong Learning in the Twenty-First Century: The Changing Role of Educational Personnel*, ILO, Geneva.

Inglis, T. (1986). *Priority Areas in Adult Education*. Dublin: Aontas.

Irish Times (2000). Adult Education. *Opinion, Irish Times*.

<http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/letters/2000/0803/archive.00080300100.html>

(checked 12-July-2003).

Irvine, D.G. (1991). Adult Education in the Republic of Ireland : The Training of Adult Educators. In P. Jarvis and A. Chadwick (Eds.) *Training Adult Educators in Western Europe* (pp. 45-58). London: Routledge.

Jarvis, P. (1993). *Adult and Continuing Education*. London: Routledge.

Johnson, W.B. and Packer, A.H. (1987). *Workforce 2000*. Indianapolis: Hudson Institute.

Johnston, D.J. (1998). Lifelong Learning for all. *OECD Observer*, No. 214 October/November 1998, p.1.

http://www.oecd.org/publications/observer/214/editorial_eng.htm. (checked 12-July-2003).

Johnston, R. (2000). *Education for Inclusion or Imprisoned in the Global Classroom*. Paper presented at SCUTREA, 30th Annual Conference, 3-5 July 2000, University of Nottingham. <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001455.doc> (checked 12-July-2003).

Kairamo, S. (1989). *Education for Life: A European Strategy*. Stuttgart: ERT.

Kazemek, F.E. (1988). Necessary Changes: Professional Involvement in Adult Literacy Programs. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, no. 4, pp. 464-488.

Kett, M. (1991). Literacy in the 1990's. In *Literacy Initiatives - Proceedings of a Conference Organised by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee* (pp. 13-16). Dublin: Curriculum Development Unit.

Kirkwood, G. and Kirkwood, C. (1989). *Living Adult Education. Freire in Scotland*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Knapper, C. and Cropley, A.J. (1985). *Lifelong learning and higher education*. London: Croom Helm.

Knowles, M. (1996). Andragogy: An Emerging Technology for Adult Learning. In R. Edwards, A. Hanson and P. Raggat (Eds.), *Boundaries of Adult Learning* (pp. 82-98). London: Routledge / Open University.

Krahn, H. & Lowe, G. (1999). Literacy in the workplace. *Perspectives*, Summer: pp.38-44.

Livingstone, D. W. (1998). *The education-jobs gap: underemployment or economic democracy*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Local Ireland (1999). *Adult Education*. <http://www.local.ie/content/2176.shtml>
(checked 12-July-2003).

Longworth, N. (1999). *Making Lifelong Learning Work: Learning Cities for a Learning Century*. London: Kogan Page

Longworth, N. and Davis, W.K. (1996). *Lifelong Learning: New Vision, New Implications, New Roles for People, Organizations, Nations and Communities in the 21st Century*. London: Kogan Page.

Mace, J. (1979). *Working with words: literacy beyond school*. London : Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative [for] Chameleon.

Martin, I. (1999). Lifelong learning: Stretching the discourse. In P. Oliver (Ed.) *Lifelong and continuing education: What is a learning society?* (pp. 181-194). Aldershot: Ashgate

McCarthy, C. (1960). Conference Address. *Fundamental and Adult Education*, vol. 12, pp. 74-78.

McDonogh, O. (1999). *NALA – Socrates Project Consultation on Quality*. Dublin: NALA.

McGivney, V. (1993). Participation and non-participation: a review of the literature. In R. Edwards, S. Sieminski and Zeldin, D. (Eds.), *Adult Learners, Education and Training* (pp 11-30). London: Routledge.

McNamara, G., Mulcahy, C. and O'Hara, J. (2001). *An Analysis of the Training Needs of Trainers in the Further Education Sector in Ireland*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science/ Commission of the European Communities' Leonardo da Vinci Programme.

- McNaughton, C. (1999). *Literacy in the Community Learning Context*.
<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/craig/craig.PDF> (checked 12-July-2003).
- Mee, G. and Wiltshire, H. (1978). *Structure and performance in adult education*.
London, Longman.
- Mellon, C.A. (1990). *Naturalistic Inquiry for Library Science: methods and applications for research, evaluation, and teaching*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco:
Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Mirvis, P. H. and Seashore, S. E. (1982). Creating ethical relationships in organisational research. In Sieber, J. E. (Ed.), *The ethics of social research: surveys and experiments* (pp.79-104). New York; Springer.
- Mitchell, C. and Sackney, L. (2000). *Profound Improvement: Building Capacity for a Learning Community*. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.
- Morgan, M. (1999). Problems of Literacy Among Irish Adults: How Bad Are They, and What Can Schools Do? In O. O'Leary, (Ed.), *Issues in Education (Volume 4)* :

2020 - A Vision for Education in the 21st Century (pp. 1-8). Dublin: ASTI.

Morgan, M., Hickey, B. and Kellaghan, T. (1997). *Education 2000, International Adult Literacy Survey: Results for Ireland (A Report to the Minister for Education)*.

Dublin: Government Stationery Office.

Murphy, C. (1973). *Adult Education Committee - Final Report*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Murphy, M. (1997). *Capital, class and adult education: the international political economy of lifelong learning in the European Union*.

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000273.doc> (checked 12-July-2003).

NALA (1997(a)). *Horizon Project Interim Report- Access and Participation in Adult Literacy Schemes*. Dublin: NALA.

NALA (1997(b)). *Annual Report 1996-1997*. Dublin: NALA.

NALA (1998). *Response to the Green Paper on Adult Education*. Dublin: NALA.

NALA (2000). *NALA Tutors Newsletter*, May 2000.

NALA (2002). *Training Needs Analysis of Adult Literacy Practitioners: Conducted for the National Adult Literacy Agency by CHL Consulting Company Limited.* Dublin: NALA.

NALA (2003). *Tutors & Students In The Literacy Service.*

<http://www.nala.ie/tutors/index.tmpl?sec=4> (checked 12-July-2003).

NALD (1998). *Networks*, vol.3,no.1.

<http://www.nald.ca/naldnews/98winter/opening.htm> (checked 12-July-2003).

National Institute for Literacy (2000). *Literacy skills for 21st century America: A foundation for creating a more literate nation.* (Draft Working Report). Washington, DC.

O'Donnell, M. (1981). *A New Introduction to Sociology.* Walton on Thames: Nelson.

OECD (1991). *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Ireland.* Paris: OECD.

OECD (1995). *Literacy, Economy and Society: Results of the First International Adult Literacy Survey.* Paris: OECD.

OECD (1997). *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society: Further Results from the*

International Adult Literacy Survey. Paris: OECD.

OECD (1999). *Economic Survey of Ireland, May 1999*. Paris: OECD.

Oliver, E. (2000, June 15) One-Quarter of adults are functionally illiterate. *Irish Times*.

<http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/ireland/2000/0615/archive.00061500035.html>

(checked 12-July-2000).

O'Murchu, M. (1986). *The Role of Irish Universities and University Level Institutions in Continuing Education*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University College, Dublin.

Open University (1988). *Educational Evaluation- OU Course E811 Study Guide*. Milton Keynes: Open University Educational Enterprises.

O'Sullivan, D. (1992). Eire. In P. Jarvis (Ed.), *Perspectives on Adult Education and Training in Europe* (pp. 336-355). London: NIACE.

O'Sullivan, E. (1999). *CDVEC Adult Literacy Provision: Who are the Participants? What are the Issues? The Report of a Survey into CDVEC Adult Literacy Provision Funded under the Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme*. Dublin: CDVEC Adult Education Board.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd ed). Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Penny, R. (1984). Numeracy as a Communication and Coping Skill. *Viewpoints*, no.1.

Perelman, L.J. (1984). *The Learning Enterprise: Adult Learning, Human Capital and Economic Development*. Washington, DC: The Council of State Planning Agencies.

Report of the Commission on Adult Education (1984). *Lifelong Learning (Kenny Report)*. Dublin: Government Publications

RTE (2000, June 14). OECD report highlights moderate literacy levels in Ireland. RTE News, June 14, 2000. <http://www.rte.ie/news/2000/0614/literacy.html> (checked 12-July-2003).

Sargant, N. (1996). Learning and 'Leisure. In R. Edwards, A. Hanson and P. Raggat (Eds.) *Boundaries of Adult Learning* (pp.196-210). London: Routledge / Open University.

Scottish Executive (2001). *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Scribner, S. (1984). Literacy in Three Metaphors. *American Journal of Education*, 93, pp. 6-21.

Scribner, S. and Cole, M. (1981). *The Psychology of Literacy*. Cambridge: The Harvard University Press.

Seddon, T. (1998) Different Drums, Different Drummers: but whose beat is authorised? In F. Ferrier & D. Anderson (Eds.), *Different Drums: One Beat?* Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

Sergiovanni, T. (1994). *Building community in schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Shields, C. M. (2000). Learning from difference: Considerations for schools as communities. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 30(3).

Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. London: Sage Publications.

Sticht, T. (2000). *Are We Facing a "Literacy Surplus" in the Workforces of the United States and Canada?* <http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/sticht/surplus/cover.htm> (checked 12-July-2003).

Stokes, D. and Watters, E. (1997). *Ireland: Vocational Education and Training: A*

Guide. Dublin: Leonardo Da Vinci Programme National Co-ordination Unit.

Stonier, T. (1983). *The Wealth of Information*. London: Thames Methuen.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. (2nd ed.) London: Sage Publications.

Sugrue, C. and Ui Thuama, C. (1997). Lifelong Learning for Teachers in Ireland: policy, provision and vision. *British Journal of In-service Education*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 55 - 70.

Thompson, D. (1994). Adult Education in the Third World: The Case of Adult Literacy. in J.D. Sinnott (Ed.) *Interdisciplinary Handbook of Adult Lifespan Learning* (pp. 337 – 347). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Thorstad, I. (1992). Adult Numeracy and Responsible Citizenship. *Adults Learning*, 4(4).

Toll, C. A. (2001). Critical and postmodern perspectives on school change. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 16(4), pp. 345-67.

Tough, A. (1971). The adult learning projects: A fresh approach to theory and practice. *Adult Learning*. Toronto, Ontario: Institute for Studies in Education.

UN (1999). *Human Development Report 1999*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Van Der Kamp, M. (1997). *Concerns About Literacy Skills of Older Adults*. Paper delivered at the 27th Annual SCUTREA conference 'Crossing Borders, Breaking Boundaries: Research in the Education of Adults', 1st to 3rd July 1997, University of London. *Education-Line* <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000292.html> (checked 12-July-2003).

Velis, J.P. (1990). *Through a Glass Darkly - Functional Illiteracy in Industrialised Countries*. Paris: UNESCO.

Warburton, M. (1982) *Mathematics: A Divided Nation*. London: ALBSU.

Ward, F. (1991). Local Literacy Schemes. In *Literacy Initiatives - Proceedings of a Conference Organised by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee* (pp. 27-29). Dublin: Curriculum Development Unit.

Wells, A. (1995). We're Against Volunteers? *The Albsu Magazine*, Winter 1995.

Wells, A. (1997). Does Numeracy Matter? *Adults Learning*, vol. 8, no.6, pp. 151-152.

Appendix One

Tutor Questionnaire

TUTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

This is part of the research element of the thesis I am in the process of writing for a Doctor of Education degree for the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. I hope the the results of my whole study will provide useful and relevant information for the Adult Literacy and Basic Education sector in Ireland. The more responses I receive will ensure that this is the case. Please return this in the envelope provided to your literacy scheme and it will be forwarded to me. All replies will be treated in total confidence.

1. How long have you been an adult literacy/basic education tutor?
Less than 1 year 1- 2 years 3-4 years
5-6 years 7-8 years over 8 years

2. Are you a paid or volunteer tutor?

3. What type of tuition are you currently involved in?
One-to-one group
Please state subject(s) taught

4. How often do you tutor adult learners on the scheme?
Once a week (2 hours)
Twice a week (4hours)
More than twice a week (4 hours +) Indicate weekly hours _____

5. In relation to your work as a literacy / basic education tutor, please state the number of:
one-to-one sessions you hold per week
small group (2-3 people) sessions you hold per week
large group (4-8 people) sessions you hold per week

6. Why did you choose to become an adult literacy/basic skills tutor? (tick all that apply)
Desire to help others
Interest in teaching or extending your skills
Desire for a personal challenge
Previous contact with someone with literacy/numeracy problems
Had yourself had literacy problems
Other - Please specify

7. Did you receive initial training prior to becoming a tutor?
Yes No
If yes, how long was the course and did it have any type of accreditation?

8. Did you feel that this training adequately prepared you for tutoring adult learners?
Yes No

Give Reasons

9. Is inservice training available?
Yes No

Give Details

10(a) Have you availed of inservice training?

Yes No

(b) If no, please indicate from the statements below the reason(s) that most apply for not undertaking training.

Times of training unsuitable

Too busy

Felt you didn't need training

Other - Please specify

11. How would you like future inservice training to develop?

12. Have you experienced any of the following benefits or satisfaction since joining the scheme?(tick all that apply)

Had a feeling of doing something worthwhile for others

Increased your self confidence

Had pleasure in learning new skills

Seen new opportunities for developing your own capabilities

Other - Please specify

13. Have you experienced any of the following frustrations and difficulties as an ABE tutor?(tick all that apply)

Shortage of teaching materials

Could not get through to a student (teaching or learning blockage)

The same student failing to turn up on several occasions

Inadequate support and encouragement

Other - Please specify

14(a) During your time as a literacy/basic education tutor have you helped your student(s) in any ways other than initial literacy tuition?
Yes No

(b) If yes, what kind of things have you done?

15(a) Have you ever been matched unsuccessfully with a student?
Yes No

(b) If yes what reason(s) were there for the matching being unsuccessful?
The matching never got off the ground
Student lost interest
Didn't get on with student
Other - Please specify

16. Before you became a tutor have you had experience of:(tick all that apply)
Teaching children to read/write spell
Teaching adults to read/write/spell
Formal teaching of any kind
Helping people with learning difficulties
Any jobs which have been useful in basic education - Please specify

17. Which of the following improvements would you like to see happen within your own scheme?(tick all that apply)
Improved Premises
Increased teaching resources
Full time tutors
More ongoing training
Other - Please specify

18. With regard to the adult learners that you have tutored or are currently tutoring, indicate which of the following benefits for the learning (other than improvement of their skills) have you observed?(tick all that apply)
Improvement in employment
Increased self-confidence
Participation in other learning activities
More involvement in local community
Greater participation in child's education
Other - Please specify

19.(a) In your opinion, should all tutors be given the opportunity to study for an accredited certificate or diploma programme in adult basic education?

Yes No

Give Reason(s)

(b) Would you be interested in studying for such a course?

Yes No

Give Reason(s)

20.(a) Do you believe that fulltime group tutor positions should be provided in each scheme?

Yes No

Give Reasons

(b) Would you be interested in increasing the amount of tutoring that you do in your literacy scheme?

Yes No

Give Reasons

It is necessary to ask for some personal details. Your replies will be treated in the strictest confidence

Sex: Male Female

Age Group: 20 or less 21- 30
31 - 40 41 - 50
51 - 60 61 or more

Occupation: Full time paid work Part time paid work
Unemployed Working at home (fulltime)
Retired Student

Qualifications:

Do you have any of the following qualifications?

Primary Certificate Group/ Intermediate/ Junior Certificate
Leaving Certificate or equivalent National Certificate or Diploma
First Degree Teaching Certificate/ Diploma
Higher Degree Professional Qualification

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

After all surveys have been returned a small sample of tutors will be interviewed. This will involve a face-to-face meeting or telephone interview. If you are willing to be interviewed please write your contact details below. These will be treated with the strictest confidence and will be discarded after the interviews have been completed.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Appendix Two

Interview Schedule

Background in Adult Literacy.

Presentation and Discussion of Main Findings:

- Approximately one half of tutors have 2 years or less experience and high turnover of tutors.
- Majority of tutors are involved in one-to-one tuition and tutor for 2 hours a week and are volunteers.
- The motivations for becoming a basic education are primarily altruistic as expected, however 54% were interested in teaching . A very small minority (2.1%) had literacy problems themselves.
- Vast majority (93%) received initial training with three quarters of these feeling it was adequate. Most training not accredited and last approx 20 hours.
- 90% of tutors had inservice training available with 76.5% availing of it. Those who didn't avail primarily felt that times were unsuitable, they were too busy or they didn't need training.
- The major frustrations for tutors were failing to get through to students (34%) and student failing to turn up (38%).
- 63% of tutors have given help to students other than basic education, e.g. helping to apply for jobs, filling out forms, driving theory.
- 37% have had formal teaching experience while 28.5% have a formal teaching qualification
- Nearly 90% of tutors feel an accredited cert or diploma should be available to all with 62% expressing an interest in studying for such a course.
- 73% feel that full time group tutors should be employed. Those who disagreed and gave an opinion were generally of the opinion that the sector would become too school- like and would lose its character. Only 36% are prepared to increase the amount of tutoring they are prepared to do.
- Vast majority of tutors (84.5%) are female.
- Apart from the under 20's with no representation and the 21-30 age group with 8% the other age groups are evenly spread with approx 20% in each of the other age groups.
- Only 8% of tutors have not completed second level education (with 25% educated to primary degree level and 13% to higher degree level).
- 53% of tutors feel that ongoing training is the most important improvement needed, with premises (34%), teaching resources (41%) and fulltime tutors (38%) all figuring very strongly
- 88% of tutors indicate that their students increased their self confidence during their time in basic education and 46% said students participated in other learning activities. 34% stated that their students now played a greater part in their children's education Only 26% indicated that their students improved their employment.

Appendix Three
Sample Quotes File From Surveys

Why did you choose to become an adult literacy/basic skills tutor?

Other

- **Was recovering from serious motor bike accident – took focus of ‘myself’**
- **Had experience of training staff in previous job**
- **Listening skills**
- **The enjoyment I hoped to experience**
- **Time to spare**
- **As a Sister of Mercy I see education of those with problems a priority**
- **I appreciate my own skills so much and understand how difficult it must be to manage without basic skills**
- **To try to understand how people coped without literacy skills**
- **Retired teacher – children growing – time available**
- **A desire to enable so many people disabled by our education system in Ireland**
- **Did not really choose this part of the job. It evolved. When I attempted to deliver a Health Programme it became obvious that Literacy was a problem. Part of my job as coordinator/trainer on Primary Health Care Programme for Disadvantaged women, mainly from the settled Travelling Community**
- **I was a primary teacher and looking for a change within education**
- **I love reading I am retired 6 yrs, my children are all involved with words i.e. drama and elocution, writing for TV**
- **Giving a little bit back having been fortunate in my reading experiences**
- **I enjoy reading and writing so much that I wanted to help someone else to share the pleasure**
- **Being able to help others enjoy reading and writing**
- **Strong belief that literacy is a basic right for all**
- **To earn a living**
- **Interest in language**
- **I love reading and like to see others have that enjoyment if they wish**
- **Aware of the problem of illiteracy in our country**
- **Enjoyed reading etc – wished to share this**
- **Interest in working with adults as opposed to children**
- **Retired English teacher**
- **Had numeracy problems and left school early – 14**
- **Felt my previous teaching experience could be of use**
- **Believe that literacy is vital to a thriving society**
- **To get some basic training to help with my new post as Resource Teacher for Special Education**
- **A friend who was a tutor encouraged me to train**
- **Enjoy high-fliers and slow learners**
- **Re entering workforce following illness**
- **Love of books and reading, wanting to share this pleasure**
- **Interest in teaching/literacy**

- Interested in seeing how Irish people fared literacy wise – as I taught English in Nigeria most of my life
- Desire to give back that which I was privileged to receive myself
- Had a huge interest in literacy during university yrs. Particularly during Higher Diploma of Ed yr
- Following a personal crisis I had a need to find a purpose in my life
- Desire to ‘give back to the community
- Had a good education myself – felt I owed something to those that hadn’t
- Finding so much pleasure in reading – wish to pass it on to others
- Became involved through a friend who is a tutor
- Talking to other tutors
- Part-Time work suited current needs
- I was invited to the scheme (as a retired teacher)
- Desire to teach people who want to learn
- I wanted to share my love of literacy/learning and perhaps make a career change
- As a trade unionist I feel it necessary
- Way to meet other people
- Coming from an EFL background, I perceived literacy work as an extension of my existing skills
- I had gone through the literacy myself and I knew how hard it is
- To help overcome ‘cabin fever’ after birth of baby and got hooked
- Request by national union (suptu) to members to participate
- I thought it was a very necessary thing and I felt that it was something I could do
- Had completed a Montessori Training Diploma course
- I like English and I like to help people who want to help and improve themselves
- Dyslexic daughter
- To share and encourage the joy of reading

Did you receive initial training prior to becoming a tutor?

If yes, how long was the course and did it have any type of accreditation?

- 6 weeks, no accreditation
- 20 hours also single cert in Adult and Community education
- the course was over four evenings and two full days, there was no accreditation
- 18 hrs – no accreditation at the time
- I think I did ten 2 hourly training sessions over 10 weeks and subsequently went on several special training sessions organised by NALA
- 3 months – no
- 6 weeks of 2 hours weekly intensive input. Plenty of interaction with tutors and group. Being given a student was confirmation of my suitability for this work
- 20 hrs
- 8 week of 2 hours per week – no accreditation
- 9 x 2 hour sessions. No accreditation

- **Not from scheme as was already special ed. Teacher + tutor dyslexic pupils including adult learners**
- **10 weeks**
- **20 hours no**
- **20 hours**
- **A few hours**
- **Tutor training course ABLE no accreditation**
- **20 hours – Basic Literacy Training Course**
- **10 weeks**
- **10 weeks – no accreditation**
- **30 hours**
- **10 weeks (one evening per week)**
- **1 year course for Diploma in Information Technology**
- **6 weeks, no accreditation**
- **2 months no accreditation**
- **It consisted of five non residential weekends and had no accreditation**
- **20 hours no accreditation**
- **8 weeks – one night a week, no accreditation**
- **5 weeks x 2 nights a week (10) no accreditation**
- **Nine weeks**
- **A number of all day courses - one**
- **One day (4 hours)**
- **Approx 10/12 night sessions no accreditation**
- **15 weeks, 2 hrs/ week – certificate of attendance**
- **20 hours**
- **A weekend in-service training**
- **Short course no accreditation (I am a retired primary school principal)**
- **16 hours**
- **Approx /8 weeks**
- **20+ hours – no accreditation**
- **10 weeks (2 hr. sessions)**
- **8 days night classes over 8 weeks**
- **8 weeks – no accreditation**
- **3 months – certificate**
- **10 week cert course with KLEAR, Dublin**
- **1 to 1 course, groups, ncva**
- **6 weekly 1 hr sessions no accreditation**
- **3 days – no accreditation**
- **Six weeks- 12 hours approx no**
- **6 wks (I think!)**
- **8 weeks. No accreditation**
- **8 weeks no accreditation**
- **No**
- **6 week course one night per week**
- **10 weeks – no accreditation then. I have since done year one in education and training (via Maynooth)**
- **10 – 12 hours – no**
- **10 weeks**
- **6 weeks – no accreditation**
- **Six two hour sessions and one full day. No accreditation.**
- **10 weeks no**
- **10 weeks (2 hr sessions) – no**
- **10 weeks training course no accreditation**

- 10 x 2 hrs 10 weeks no accreditation
- 6 or 8 weeks (I think) no accreditation
- 10 weeks – no accreditation
- 9 weeks. No.
- No. I am a qualified National Teacher
- 13 weeks
- 12 hrs
- 4-6 weeks – one evening per week. No accreditation
- 4 weeks

Did you feel that this training adequately prepared you for tutoring adult learners?

Give Reasons

- But experience gathered along the way is good also
- It was sufficient to enable me to undertake the tutoring but could be improved through showing videos of actual sessions to trainee tutors and by informing tutors what the odds are overall for literacy students sticking with the course so that in the event of a student departing unannounced the tutor can factor the fall off rate into his/her analysis of his/her own performance when trying to decide the reason for the departure
- Because each student differs. Ongoing training is necessary e.g. workshops and others where people can learn from the experience of others. Inservice training is beneficial
- The training gave valuable insights into tutoring adults with sensitivity, respect and common sense. It introduced us to practical materials and teaching methods. The same people are still training personnel and running the cork branch of Altrusa. They are very dedicated and skilled and there is a sense of caring continuity for tutors and students
- Had it not been for my own experience with my daughter, I would not have been prepared for the different problems and attitudes of my students
- But no matter what training is received the tutor needs to adapt to the individual student at whatever level he/she is at
- As with most things there was only so much that could be taught in isolation and after 10 weeks it was time to learn by doing. Following the 10 weeks training, tutors were only assigned to students on a one-to-one basis. Tutors would not have been ready for a group following that initial training.
- Yes because my job is to improve basic literacy skills and inspire confidence to enable the student to progress to a group situation where there are qualified teachers
- Having had my training as a Montessori teacher and the initial training I felt confident to become a literacy tutor, also I had attended a course on dyslexia which helped
- It alerted me to some of the initial problems I might experience with a new student, these included an unwillingness to write anything down due to a lack of confidence about his/her handwriting. We were also given an exercise in Russian. This made us realise how hard a student with very little literacy would view the exercises we set them. I found

this invaluable because sometimes it is easy to forget how difficult it is for someone to understand written words. We learnt that, to them it can appear like a foreign language. This exercise also lead one to think up ways of getting the point across and making them understand what was written. Overall I thought the teaching methods suggested and attention paid to the students sometimes daunting position invaluable in my teaching experience

- **Training helps greatly but experience and a thoughtful approach are what really help a tutor for the multiplicity of problems that evolve. An individual approach to every single student is necessary**
- **Training wasn't as structured or standardised as it is now. I feel current courses adequately prepare tutors + are supported by more inservice training and NALA training**
- **Not for this man who was quite clear on what he wanted to be able to read – much of it technical – up to now he has been relying on his exceptional memory for verbal instructions to enable him to do certain tasks. Coloured cards and so forth would not have been suitable – he could well have found them insulting!**
- **But note he is the only student that I have**
- **I had teaching experience at this time**
- **For me yes because each of my students to date have a good knowledge of their letters. I wonder how I would manage with someone if I were to start from scratch**
- **I knew before I trained that I had it in me to be a good tutor. The training just confirmed what I already knew**
- **Because it was given by very experienced tutors**
- **I only began to understand the problems properly when I began to deal with people on a one to one basis**
- **But turned out not to be very relevant to my pupil (just under average)**
- **Good comprehensive course**
- **It was very well explained and delivered to us**
- **A one year part time course would be better preparation for all types of learners (1 night a week course)**
- **Parts of the course were very informative**
- **It confirmed what I knew as a teacher**
- **It helped me to see the difference between teaching adults and children**
- **A reserved yes as I am learning by experience also – experience cannot be gained in class**
- **It helped me to understand the difficulties people had and how to deal with them (patience is the key)**
- **It was very comprehensive, professional, challenging. The enthusiasm and dedication of the leaders was most inspiring**
- **I already had previous training**
- **No practical experience and no reference during the course on materials**
- **I learnt that teaching adults differs from teaching children**
- **Covered al the main areas but of course only practice makes perfect**
- **No training is the same as the practical job of teaching the student, you learn as your student learns**
- **It was only a basic introductory course – I did not expect to have a student so soon**
- **Possibly not for those without previous experience**
- **As far as it could go, generally. After that each pupil has individual needs + one has to do ones own thinking**

- **It taught me how to deal and relate with adult literacy students**
- **Training gives a good basic guide to problems which may arise, while not being able to cover all eventuality**
- **I feel a lot more should be done**
- **I felt that an ongoing training facility would be of great value**
- **The trainers are experienced people – the training is based on relevant projects and examples**
- **It was adequate as an introduction but ongoing training would be helpful**
- **In some ways adequate training , but would need more training**
- **Already had necessary training**
- **Good start – needed further inservice re spelling, reading**
- **It was a good introduction and mentally prepared me for the task**
- **Always learning**
- **Felt it was rushed + would be better if longer time given**
- **Ok. Given inservice training + support available**
- **Training very good but no substitute for experience**
- **Mainly yes – some things can only be learned with experience**
- **It gave me insight into literacy needs how to help in a professional manner + to treat people equally**
- **10 years ago yes. As needs of those who come for help became known, regular updates and in-services are carried out**
- **It gave me training in coping with 1 to 1 and also how to deal with group work**
- **Some of the training was a little basic, however I do understand that it was difficult to cover all aspects of tutoring**
- **Because I have not come across anything I was not expecting**
- **It made me more aware of the need for a different approach when teaching adult learners and literacy problems that would readily come to mind without experience in dealing with them**
- **I was not well enough motivate to benefit fully from training**
- **Because I was already trained as an esl tutor**
- **The course topics were logically complementary. However, after 2 years I have probably become stale – frequent revision/review programme probably necessary**
- **Nothing can really prepare you, no curriculum as such applies, every group and person varies hugely**
- **It provided relevant starting points, emphasised typical difficulties, advised on worksheets and distributed a lot of relevant data/research**
- **Perhaps monitored teaching could have been introduced. Due to limited resources we talked about teaching rather than actively teaching and discussing issues arising from this**
- **Tutor training – very good. I already have a teaching degree**
- **I was apprehensive before meeting my first student but having met him and discussed what was needed we drew up a plan of study. This was re-assessed from time to time and to a certain extent I developed more ideas as we went along and I understood in more detail what he wanted**
- **I felt it provided a good basis for tutoring however some initial co-tutoring with an experienced tutor might also be useful**
- **Gave good grounding in area but actual experience teaches much more. Constant training on a regular basis is essential as everyone is different and new knowledge and skills helps me to prepare for class work**
- **Course was informative but not long enough**

- **It was very in-depth training and covered a lot of areas which I found very helpful as a tutor later on**
- **I was shocked at the low levels of literacy in the group of 27 women I am working with. One-person aged 51 had never been to a school. Several others could not read or write even their names. Others have no understanding of basic shapes, money or counting, sorting etc. none of 27 women have books, newspapers etc. ever in their homes**
- **Too short and no training can rally prepare one for the real thing**
- **In a general sense it was very thought provoking and enlightening. My first student though is a slightly different situation. His first language is Arabic and he is most interested in developing his ability to converse in English**
- **It was an excellent course by experienced tutors**
- **Covers a wide variety of subject matter and interesting methods of instruction to enable tutors to apply their experiences**
- **Required basic skills. Experience came with practice**
- **I suspected my pupil had dyslexia and I had to buy some books + research this condition. Consequently NALA have organised a full days lecture and workshop on Dyslexia**
- **The training provided a wide range covering problems that may arise**
- **Helps to avoid pitfalls. Its only when one starts tutoring that one really starts to learn. There isn't any way one could be trained – it has to be hands on experience**
- **Just enough to begin with – the material covered by course is better absorbed after having some practical experience of tutoring**
- **Needed more practical real-life methods of teaching. More material needed for a start – off tutor. Good on explaining adult needs**
- **Too short**
- **It was a good starting point but you begin to learn when you actually start the tutoring**
- **No practical work e.g. should have to sit in o classes before you are allowed to have your own class**
- **Very practical and helpful also support network established during training**
- **The initial training has been continuously updated and developed by in-service training**
- **For part of the training we had to decipher signs and symbols and read their content. It made me aware of the difficulties of people with reading problems**
- **I felt adequately prepared to fid a starting point with students and was shown how to design a programme (with the student's guidance) that would aim to meet their personal literacy needs**
- **But I feel we got a lot of info very quickly – not much time between classes to absolve info, etc...**
- **The fact that students standard of R & R can be so varied & that in the short period of training it would be impossible to cover**
- **Lots of case studies, workshop sessions**
- **I don't think any training can prepare you completely unless you have contact with students**
- **Yes at the time. Since then both the scheme and I have progressed and further training has been offered and availed of. I also feel that the experience I have gained has helped enormously**

- **Training adequate but as I progressed felt I would need more training later for problem I did not foresee**
- **I was already a teacher and wondered how the others would manage with so little training. My student is a man of sixty with no reading skills and I have made all the reading material myself. Would others be able to do that?**
- **Yes, but only because I had previous experience in teaching English as a foreign language**
- **Yes and no. When I started tutoring I learned a lot as I went along which can only be gained by experience**
- **Students vary in standard and in ability and I feel tutors have to adapt to suit**
- **I am a primary school teacher which helps**
- **Seemed to cover reading, writing and spelling well**
- **It was rather haphazard at that time. Training has improved enormously in this scheme since then**
- **There needs were very basic**
- **All available help within locality was made available**
- **Course was not practical enough. Used a very common sense approach to tutoring when I started in common with other tutors**
- **14 hours training doesn't make you a teacher but the course was very practical and well organised**
- **It was too short**
- **Yes. Had spent 45 years teaching in primary school**
- **More time needed to learn skills to deal with needs of different students at different levels of education (or none)**
- **Lecturers were well qualified and explained everything – the reason why**
- **I ticked both, as both are true. Yes because every students needs are so different our basic training was adequate. No, because once you have your student it would be helpful to have n organiser help plan a study programme**
- **It gave a very good overall coverage of all aspects of learning and of skills needed for successful tuition**
- **The initial training was adequate when I started with a 1:1 student**
- **Skills were dealt with in relation to reading, writing and spelling – also there were follow up in-service days on spelling and numeracy. However experience really is the best teacher**
- **It was too rushed – tutor was excellent – short space of time didn't allow for revision**
- **It taught how to approach teaching adults**
- **I taught it widely covered all aspects of adult literacy tutoring**
- **Too short duration. Specifically geared towards very basic tutoring. No complexity at all – unrealistic for 'real world'!**
- **It gave exact details as to how to plan and prepare for your sessions**
- **Most aspects were covered in-depth**
- **It was very thorough**
- **Although I feel as you get working – more training is necessary**
- **I indicate yes in as far as it is possible to cover the many literacy problems one can encounter**
- **Gave a broad outline to what literacy cover when tutoring**
- **Excellent training course – useful reference for future – however theory no substitute for experience**

- **A lot of time was spent on theory and less emphasis on practical work e.g. worksheets, lesson planning**
- **Theoretically yes – but practically no**
- **Should have been longer**
- **When I began above training course I had my own thoughts on tutoring. After a lesson I figured out I was very wrong. My way was all wrong. Thanks to training I think I am a much better tutor**
- **Emphasis on different approach to teaching. Also the provision of handouts (photocopies) was very useful**
- **There were a lot of sessions, plus hands on and in the early part of the courses we sat in on tutors giving sessions. We looked at literacy in-depth in our own lives and gained a good understanding of its need**
- **But still needed a bit about actual on hand training**
- **Helped us to know how to cope with slow learners**
- **It wasn't meant to. My linguistics courses were helpful, however**
- **I have had lots of follow up courses including accredited courses**
- **Because of the large amount of**
- **I knew nothing about the subject so the course was ideal**
- **Gave good pointers for getting going. What you do then depends on your pupil to a large degree. There is always someone (a full time organiser) to help source materials and give advice. They are very supportive and encouraging.**
- **Covered a lot of knowledge, skills required**
- **Excellent tutor**
- **Answered a lot of questions, which I had around the problem. Built up my confidence as a tutor. Gave plenty of practical advice about materials**
- **There was so much to take in. Phonics is totally new to me. I had quite forgotten rules I guess I must have learned in primary school. I was less confident at the end of the course than the beginning. What I learned has helped me, given me a starting point with my student.**
- **But backup was available when needed. It took time and practice before I was confident at tutoring**
- **It was carried out thoroughly and professionally and advised about further resources. Also I am already a teacher**
- **It was good basis – but what can prepare one adequately for the individuality of needs in each learner?!**
- **Very difficult to deepen training until have had some practical experience**
- **Speaking with experienced tutors was very valuable also**
- **Given that every student has very different needs, it can be difficult to cover all the angles. Training could have covered more 'hands on' type of teaching skills**
- **When other training came up we were fully aware through our initial training**
- **Initial training in the 80s was geared to setting up schemes and one to one and no teaching or literacy methodology**
- **I found it v.good – did the tutor training again in Limerick (ALSS) – 7 weeks when I came back to tutoring after a break of few years. I did have the advantage that I am a 3rd Level lecturer with experience teaching adults**
- **I was already a teacher and just wanted to know how to handle adults with learning difficulties**

- **While it covered everything in theory some problems aren't foreseen**
- **I believe it is adequate to commence one to one tutoring**
- **More preparation needed for meeting student + issues around setting limits**
- **When a person was to turn up to teach us another person would have to fall in line unexpectedly and this was not fair**
- **Best way to learn is through one's own actual experience. Yes – gave a fairly good introduction to the issue**
- **The training I received covered anything I have encountered with my learners**
- **I am a retired teacher**
- **My students responded well and persevered. Passed exams and continued to higher level**

Is in-service training available?

Give Details

- **Occasional seminars etc**
- **About once per term – all tutors. Directed mainly by our needs**
- **10 hours a year**
- **Numeracy – a single module of the NALA/WIT national certificate for tutors. This is a five-day course. I also attended a one-day preparation courses in communications. From time to time we have meetings to do with literacy and basic mathematics tutoring**
- **Tutor training courses**
- **Keeps one up to date**
- **Evening lectures + workshops**
- **On an ongoing basis on a range of subjects**
- **From time to time there are inservice training sessions organised by the literacy scheme organisers**
- **There is a list given out and we have a choice to go to them. I have other commitments so I have not availed of any of them yet**
- **Every couple of months, my organiser arranges**
- **Training available on differing aspects – computers, phonics, spellings, numeracy, communication skills etc**
- **One session per term + NALA training sessions**
- **A module in group work skills in clonmel in December 2000**
- **Range of inservice days during the year**
- **Roughly 2 sessions per term locally. I can't fit in the training sessions that are further away but if they are rotated to Dublin I can avail of them.**
- **Choice of modules available at different locations**
- **Co. Limerick Adult Literacy Scheme training at Kilfinane Education Centre**
- **Probably**
- **4/5 evening/day workshops**
- **Training is available on a regular basis in the tuition centre e.g.**
- **Different speakers, different subjects very useful + helpful. Nice to meet up with other tutors**
- **A training session was held locally in the last 2 months**
- **I am unsure**
- **One day courses occasionally**
- **NALA provide inservice training but I as yet do not know about it**

- **Dyslexia day, lesson planning etc.**
- **Various**
- **By other tutors, NALA and guest speakers / tutors**
- **NALA hold regular workshops/training sessions for practising teachers**
- **Provided by Limerick Adult Lit , list sent out advising of options available**
- **Inservice training days are held on particular topics on a regular basis**
- **Regular inservice training on a variety of topics**
- **Spelling and numeracy**
- **Occasional courses on 'dyslexia'/'computers and literacy' etc./ NCVA info day**
- **Various seminars on different subjects**
- **Have not been informed yet**
- **Training is provided several times a year and is helpful in that tutors meet one another and discuss problems**
- **Saturdays at dundrum college commerce**
- **Seminars**
- **Co. Limerick Adult Literacy has sent me on courses and seminars run by NALA and NCVA**
- **Regular workshops are organised by the centre**
- **There is ongoing inservice provided – depending on the needs of**
- **Inservice is compulsory/ training is offered in various topics – e.g. spelling, mixed ability groups, making materials etc.**
- **In-house – tutor support and guest lecturers / speakers and training courses through NALA**
- **We have had a number of in-service days – literacy, numeracy, spelling**
- **I have further training in spelling and numeracy**
- **About 3 times yearly for 1 day**
- **Occasionally lectures are organised for tutors @ night and @ weekends**
- **Since I did my own training – many in-service days have been offered**
- **Very many courses available. See calendar of NALA Literacy Scheme Training**
- **(1) Part of initial tutor training (5 sessions) and (2) NALA provides optional training (in-service) also**
- **Plans are being drawn up for mentoring service**
- **Yes in our centre. Courses arranged to suit tutors**
- **Once or twice per year, in certain topics**
- **There has been in-service training in our centre. Also NALA have run in-service days**
- **During the year inservice on spellings, phonics etc., is available. Also on numeracy, delivering NCVA. NALA offer accredited courses such as Curriculum Development, a single module of WIT/NALA cert. in Humanities in Adult and Community Ed**
- **Our centre provides reasonably regular in-service on various aspects**
- **When I worked in California we had regular in-service training with persons who ad some expertise in some aspect of the work**
- **New accreditation courses are to be made available to the centre**
- **Computer Room only newly developed**
- **Not sure**
- **About twice yearly**
- **Organised within scheme and also opportunities to go to NALA**
- **One day training sessions are held from time to time on different specific aspects of training**

- **A variety of training days – extending skills**
- **As a voluntary tutor, the expectation is that you will attend a certain number of hours for inservice training**
- **Don't know**
- **Training is available when new matters arise**
- **4 times annually**
- **Courses on dyslexia and phonics mainly**
- **8 – 2 hour course annually**
- **Spelling – dyslexia workshops right brain/left brain functioning – ncva work shops**
- **Available from office**
- **Day sessions**
- **In-service days held frequently**
- **Inservice is readily available**
- **Junior/leaving cert, dyslexia, simplification also NALA/WIT training course**
- **I usually avail of this. I find it very good**
- **Many varied and valuable in-service courses are available**
- **Day courses twice a year**
- **Tutors within the scheme meet approx 4/5 times during period Sept/June involving different aspects of tutoring**
- **Not to my knowledge**
- **Regular upgrading of new information**
- **In-service days held approx 4 times a year**
- **NALA training, Scheme training**
- **Skills are updated and refreshed from time to time**
- **Too early in my training for in-service training**
- **NALA will be giving courses shortly**
- **I have attended several in-service courses and have greatly benefited from them**
- **General and extra data and training related. Discussion of problems (pupil related) group comments and advice**
- **In our co. limerick vec scheme we are very lucky in that we have adequate and very informative inservice training**
- **A course in clonakilty took place this Saturday (Dec 00)**
- **Workshops**
- **Spelling, listening skills, writing skills, etc**
- **Weekend sessions are organised**
- **Not that I am aware of**
- **Regular meetings on all aspects of work**
- **9 week course – peggy curtis – very satisfactory**
- **have attended phonics and spellings day**
- **NALA provide courses in Centres all over Ireland. Each literacy scheme provides training as needed in its area also**
- **Within the area**
- **Ncva help from NALA**
- **Tutors courses; training the trainers**
- **4 sessions per year**
- **One Saturday/evening per term**
- **Targeting specific areas of difficulties i.e. dyslexia, confidence building**
- **Workshops for tutors are arranged periodically**
- **Occasional lectures and / or workshops**
- **Occasional lectures**

- **We have had evenings or days on different aspects: recently a day on phonics**
- **There are many meetings throughout year on different problems – i.e. spelling; dyslexia; mnemonics**
- **In-service training available on all topics relating to literacy i.e. dyslexia, punctuation, grammar, spelling, phonics, group work, special needs, etc. most recently – listening and facilitation skills.**
- **Listening skills; how to prepare materials**
- **Regional tuition being organised**
- **Spelling – workshops etc**
- **Approx 2 one day sessions per year**
- **Different courses take place and one is always informed of these and encouraged to take part**
- **From time to time we get training in e.g. dyslexia**
- **Bray literacy scheme hopes to have more regular sessions in future – every 3-4 months**
- **Periodically – spelling, numeracy, dyslexia**
- **Occasional evening sessions**
- **Inservice is provided on a county basis, spasmodically. I am attending WIT / NALA tutor training in All Hallows, Dublin**
- **Inservice includes not only tutor training but tutor support, guest speakers etc**
- **15/16 hour training is available annually**
- **About 2-3 times a year**
- **Spelling, numeracy, counselling, computer**
- **We have inservice dealing with specific reading difficulties i.e. spelling, phonics, grammar, writing both practical and creative. We also have personal development inservice for tutors**
- **We are posted details of all available courses and encouraged to attend**
- **Details of various courses have been sent to me on a regular basis**
- **Selection of training is available, e.g. numeracy, phonics. I recently attended a dyslexia training which was excellent**
- **In our own schemes + nearby centres**
- **Courses in numeracy, spelling**
- **At least two every year – on subjects like (a) dyslexia (b) group facilitation (c) spelling strategies etc**
- **A range of inservice plus option for NALA training**
- **On a regular basis**
- **Courses on different topics are run periodically**
- **Regular sessions on topics and support sessions for tutors**
- **Every term list of inservice training both in this centre and other centre is circulated and one chooses training relevant to your needs**
- **We have been offered courses in computer skills and teaching spelling + reading in addition to the myriad of courses arranged through NALA**
- **The odd sessions over the weekend – mostly on a Saturday**
- **Further 10 hours within next year. Inservice will be available over next months**
- **Excellent inservice training available on a regular basis**
- **On a regular basis we have the option of further training**
- **Since becoming a literacy tutor I have attended numerous inservice training courses. I must complement NALA and my own literacy scheme for providing a range of relevant courses for tutors**
- **Various courses in larger centres (Cork/Dublin) but only for a fee**

- **Inservice is available a couple of times a year; e.g. spelling, IT, Simplifying materials**
- **Every year**
- **Workshops at weekends during the years**
- **Listening skills, preparing worksheets**
- **Three times a year. Spelling – information technology – planning lessons and support**
- **Days and weekends during year on various aspects of literacy**
- **Details of workshops are sent frequently through the post**
- **Courses available in group teaching, assessing student progress, spelling, etc**
- **Every six weeks**
- **Every six weeks**
- **As requested**
- **I will look into it as I progress**
- **Not sure what it covers**
- **On average two sessions per term**
- **Don't know**
- **I never queried this – at present I do not have the requirement of further training**
- **Group work accreditation (WIT) numeracy accreditation (WIT)**
- **Often a full Saturday each year plus 2 hr session on topics such as spelling or 'how's it going?'**
- **As per vec**
- **Our scheme is about to embark on a 20 hr (2 and a half hours per night for 8 nights – one per week)**
- **Every year there is a choice of inservice events and we can ask for inservice in areas we need**
- **On a county basis. Once a term but no follow-up. County wide is good if you make the commitment**
- **Our local literacy committee provide inservice training frequently**
- **Through Kerry Education Service and NALA**
- **I attended a session detailing overview of literacy situation in Ireland. Information on ongoing training available and it provided an opportunity for the tutors to discuss their needs/difficulties. Another session covered dyslexia**
- **In-house inservice provided 2-3 times a year. Informed about other training programmes**
- **We had one on 'resources' available to tutors which was helpful – also one on obstacles to learning**
- **Some – not much id say**
- **Workshops held throughout year**
- **Not sure**
- **Day seminars etc**
- **NALA courses**
- **Once every six weeks**
- **Workshops are held periodically in response to tutors needs**
- **Various day courses and workshops are run at different intervals**
- **Inservice training days with suitably trained lecturers**
- **Various inservice meetings are held regularly**

Have you availed of in-service training?

If no, please indicate from the statements below the reason(s) that most apply for not undertaking training.

Other

- **Only started within the scheme**
- **Focus is naturally on new tutors so revision of existing tutors not necessarily a priority**
- **Plan to attend next workshop**
- **Because I only completed the tutor training course in October**
- **Unfortunately spend most weekends out of Dublin**
- **Never enquired about it**
- **Only started – in the near future I will**
- **I go away quite a few weekends**
- **I intend to avail of any inservice training that I feel could be worthwhile**
- **Only just begun teaching**
- **Mainly to change the times I would like more courses at night**
- **Usually at night and I do not drive at night-time**
- **Have not been informed yet**
- **Too late when I got the timetable**
- **ITBTI (Information Technology and Business Teachers of Ireland) have updates on all new packages at all different levels**
- **Not available yet – new year**
- **All training is unpaid**
- **Am retired person don't feel like undertaking any further training**
- **Inservice training in all aspects of lit. Teaching is available**
- **Ongoing with NALA or approx. 3 times a year in centre**
- **Courses and seminars**
- **Usually twice a year**
- **Spellings and numeracy workshops were on in the Adult Centre in Cavan**
- **Have not been informed yet of dates for inservice**
- **Not sure what exactly this entails and when available. Haven't attended previously due to other commitments**
- **Have only started tutoring**
- **I work full time during the day. Weekend inservice days are unsuitable mostly when there is so much to catch up on at weekends**
- **Occasionally**
- **Unable to travel to certain regions due to my lack of transport**
- **Only in preparatory stage**
- **Hoping to avail of course which begins in February**
- **Not as much as I would have liked as I have a fulltime teaching post as well**
- **If its on your teaching day you lose your pay!**
- **Only one in-service run since I started. Only tutoring for one month.**
- **I have had almost 100 hours of in-service and am currently studying for a Cert or Diploma in Adult Literacy**
- **Only recently started tutoring**

- **Only started tuition in December, first workshop later this month**
- **Need to find out more**
- **Not in the area**
- **Not yet available**
- **Yes – on a continuous basis**
- **Various in-house meetings to skill up on**
- **One weekend only**
- **Would be interested in ongoing training**
- **I am a volunteer and don't wish to pay for further training since I am not aiming at becoming a professional in the field**
- **Not in my locality. Times for courses were all in December and not practical**
- **I have recently returned from England. The opportunity to attend a course has not come up yet, but I attend to receive further training. Also I am living in cahirciveen co. Kerry. Training centres are too far away**
- **I have only been there a short time**

How would you like future in-service training to develop?

- **Support training for tutors more cooperation between tutors – develop ideas of mentors**
- **Have no suggestion to make**
- **I would like to see more tutors availing of the inservice that is offered**
- **Possibly one to one discussions with experienced tutors**
- **More informal discussions and exchange of problems between tutors**
- **Not qualified to say**
- **I would like regular short courses on specific topics i.e. spelling, punctuation, dyslexia, etc**
- **Ongoing scheme/study days to cover variety of topics**
- **No I am happy at present**
- **Help with tutoring student**
- **At regular intervals, local/national level**
- **More forward planning with recommended preparation for tutors to maximise benefit**
- **To keep abreast of new developments so we are up to date at all times**
- **Inservice training is necessary to keep up to date with new training methods and materials**
- **Use it to learn about new developments in literacy and as learning workshops**
- **Basics to continue + computer training**
- **As long as it is ongoing**
- **More in-depth training on working with someone with dyslexia**
- **I would like to watch a one hour session on video and see what really happens with the first student**
- **Would like to avail of it, should have more free time in 2001**
- **To take place during winter months when tutorials with learners are taking place without breaks i.e. holidays**
- **More educational psychology**
- **It should take place at regular intervals so that various aspects of the problem could be worked on by tutors**
- **Satisfied at present**
- **Local + accredited**

- **Tutors should be asked what they want and need help with**
- **I'm not in a position to say at this early stage**
- **Accredited training**
- **As a volunteer I would be willing to attend inservice training sessions on local or regional basis**
- **Couldn't comment as I do not know what is on offer now**
- **More interaction with other tutors**
- **More practice of the materials given**
- **More numeracy training WIT module**
- **Recent day at Dublin airport was excellent. More of same**
- **Workshops every couple of months with new ideas, techniques, information, etc**
- **I am looking forward to course commencing 13th Feb. It will be beneficial**
- **Discussion with other tutors on how they deal with problems that arise**
- **Again, more practical examples of how to teach e.g.: spidograms, crosswords etc. more material for people who would be more advanced than basic level**
- **Continuation of day courses available within 30 miles travelling distance plus visiting tutor trainers perhaps for approx 6 – 8 weeks of a weekly class in winter**
- **More training in relation to dyslexia/sld**
- **More of it, with accreditation**
- **If we could be emailed on upcoming events and could plan ahead!**
- **Alongside my own progress as a tutor e.g. I hope to work with more groups and will appreciate more training relevant to what I am doing then**
- **To meet particular topics and issues which arise – e.g. English as a foreign language, specific learning difficulties**
- **Keeping up-to-date with the use of technology as aids to teaching**
- **Ongoing courses offered as needed, e.g., dyslexia, learning disabilities, more computer training, etc**
- **Accreditation should be awarded for training**
- **I am very pleased with the training I have attended**
- **Lots of workshops over a period of time**
- **Continue a wide range of inservice to cover as many options as possible for tutors**
- **Annual review of tutors**
- **As much inservice as possible. NALA trainers to visit schemes outside of Dublin and provide training in these schemes. Would suit more people (particularly volunteer tutors)**
- **Continue the good work! Try to get more gov aid – Computers for tutors/students**
- **facility for more intensive training in areas of interest**
- **Consultation with 'working' tutors as to what they need**
- **Periodic 'get together' of tutors to discuss problems and solutions also interchange ideas**
- **Work with new books, systems, aids, etc**
- **More on presentation skills, listening skills, how to teach!**
- **If you are prepared to train to upgrade your skills you should keep your pay ad a sub be paid to teach your class**
- **Regular sessions, dictated by tutors, in my scheme and nationally**
- **Haven't too much time**

- **By listening to tutors needs – looking forward to dyslexia inservice**
- **To run more often than once or twice a term. To have all day in-service training.**
- **Training on hoe to deal with the different forms of literacy we come across i.e. school problems, slow learners etc**
- **Teaching that covers (all) needs of experienced and new tutors**
- **Broad spectrum of courses including workshops**
- **Courses offered on Saturdays so our students don't have to miss us; some financial reward for teachers who pursue training**
- **As it is**
- **Training in IT – as I would like to become a tutor in computer studies**
- **It might be useful to have some inservice days used as a forum for shared difficulties/advances of the tutors relating to students**
- **More often (currently 2/3 times a year) more specific**
- **No comment until I have availed of one first**
- **Workshops – evenings, with experienced literacy tutors available**
- **More frequently – with a choice of dates**
- **More or less as heretofore**
- **Small study groups similar to support groups**
- **Its very good as it is**
- **In response to the needs, questions and concerns of the tutors**
- **To continue to keep matters updated**
- **Tutors work assessed + more help + debate as how to help student**
- **Id like more specialised areas**
- **(a) Free (b) detailed and well organised (c) including literature on the subject (d) including practice sessions, supervised by qualified tutors**
- **Active learning for the learner**
- **I would like if it dealt with tutors fears and questions that may arise on an open forum basis**
- **In addition to the courses offered, I think there should be opportunity for tutors to meet on a social basis. I have found other tutors often have invaluable advice and experience**
- **Help tutors to develop themselves with confidence, awareness, relaxation etc**
- **Too early for me to say**
- **I am very satisfied with the present service**
- **I would like to see more accreditation of these courses, with a constant and regular update of information available**
- **The schedule offered recently for Dublin looks promising**
- **Maybe a questionnaire to tutors asking of 'needs' they may have or ideas for others**
- **Each training session should deal with a specific subject – with more information and how to deal with each subject**
- **Don't know**
- **More emphasis on materials available**
- **More training in cork**
- **Accreditation/wit certificate**
- **Annual review of previous years difficulties**
- **Occasional workshops that do not try to be all encompassing but cover 1 or 2 areas thoroughly in 1 or 2 hours**
- **Not offered yet**
- **Once a month informal meeting with other tutors**

- **Training course for tutoring English as a second language. Professional accreditation for experienced group tutors**
- **As requested and chosen by tutors**
- **More in-depth training or dealing with students with special needs / learning disabilities**
- **A session per term**
- **As we live in cork we would like more weekend and night time training plus a move to the country instead of Dublin**
- **Focus on the development of a training programme for a student rather than individual skills**
- **As required – to suit demand**
- **Haven't thought about it**
- **Maybe an increase in the number of meetings / lectures**
- **More often**
- **To get more advice, support to enable tutors to deal with problems. Advice on new methods of teaching Maths**
- **Different literacy schemes could share ideas**
- **Fine as is. Possibly some extra ideas/ worksheets etc on Website.**
- **More structure e.g. maybe 1 night / term**
- **Would like to have regular meetings with original training group. Also sessions after classes, even for a half an hour to debrief**
- **Am happy with present situation**
- **As it has been doing**
- **Personally I feel the training provided in this scheme is very good + hope this will continue**
- **I think more practical inservice especially the development of basic skills, is needed**
- **To run more often once or twice a term. To have all day in-service training.**
- **Think that having constant access to someone who is up to date on resources etc is much more useful than, for example, a one-day seminar once every now and then.**
- **Family and workplace literacy**
- **Perhaps training courses could have a wider range i.e. TEFL, Junior Cert/Leaving Cert**
- **Cork based / evenings/ Saturdays full weekends practical hands on / knowledgeable facilitators**
- **I would like lots of advance notice of sessions well in advance and perhaps a list of topics to be covered over**
- **Difficult for full time workers. Pressure of time mostly inhibits ability or interest in attending. Inservice training is more suitable for either full-time tutors or tutors who do not have other day time jobs**
- **More practical issues addressed and more IT**
- **Experienced tutors to act as mentors for those beginning**
- **Yes- and preferably ongoing so as to get an accreditation out of it**
- **I would like a spelling day**
- **More sessions in my local area. Too many are held in Dublin**
- **More centralised where people from different schemes come together. Block training i.e. a week together**
- **As it is developing – very in-depth provision by NALA with certification, interesting lighter coverage by scheme**
- **More accessible for 1:1 tutors**
- **More sharing experiences with other tutors**

- **To have more inservice nights because they keep our ideas fresh and we always learn something new, either from inservice facilitator or from other tutors**
- **Satisfied with above. Not quite sure what I need but i'm aware of a vacuum at times**
- **Need more training for ESOL Teaching**
- **Don't know**
- **Wish it was more frequent and especially more notice of forthcoming lectures/workshops etc**
- **Present courses and frequency in klear adequate for my present needs**
- **Along the lines it is going – and especially a lot of practical courses with sharing of materials etc**
- **Provide more training and materials – more hours for tutoring**

Have you experienced any of the following benefits or satisfaction since joining the scheme?

Other

- **Learned to be more extrovert again after a long period of illness**
- **The 'buzz' of a student doing a state exam**
- **More friends, became aware of needs in the community**
- **Appreciation of personality traits that are essential to be a fair to good tutor**
- **Constant personal learning and development**
- **Have found some very shy, nervous students – full of ideas once they gained some confidence**
- **Had pleasure in learners development in terms of their skills and confidence**
- **Greater understanding and respect for adult learners – admire their ability to cope with their disability**
- **Reward seeing student get to junior cert English**
- **Have become more aware of others obstacles to learning and how they affect their lives**
- **My skills and talents have been recognised + responded to – this is very encouraging**
- **Satisfaction of seeing literacy students getting certification**
- **Meeting tutors and learners socially**
- **Meeting likeminded people, made friends**
- **Doing something on my own outside my family**
- **Benefit of sharing views and methods with tutors**
- **Too early to say yet**
- **Seen that student making progress**
- **Delighted to see increase in students self confidence**
- **I find adult learners inspiring – their courage, their perseverance, their joy in small gains**
- **I have built up new 'friendships'**
- **Made great friends – have great fun**
- **Thoroughly enjoyed student and marvelled at her hunger to learn**
- **Met some very interesting and good people – my students! (and staff)**
- **I developed a career in tutoring (started as a volunteer)**
- **Developed a rapport + friendships among other tutors + students**
- **Satisfaction of seeing an improvement in the confidence of student and of their ability**

- **Developing my creative dimension**
- **Refined my teaching skills ; - enjoyed the rapport with students and their sense of humour and their pride in small achievements**
- **Targets to achieve personally – attendance and research**
- **Had pleasure in learners development in terms of their skills and confidence**

Have you experienced any of the following frustrations and difficulties as an ABE tutor?

Other

- **Lack of self-confidence in myself compounded by limitations in my own time to prepare well for a session. Working with a text book might make things easier**
- **Lack of easy to understand grammar workbooks and exercises**
- **Occasionally pupils use sessions as social activity rather than improving literacy. Would welcome more tapes/videos**
- **As this is my second year with the same student I sometimes feel at this stage he could benefit from a group situation**
- **Review to determine continued direction for student**
- **Inadequate support from other agencies**
- **Trying to come up with ideas for teaching materials, feeling somewhat isolated due to the time I meet my student**
- **I would like more contact with other tutors**
- **Shortage of suitable Irish based material, premises unsuitable – does not allow the level of privacy demanded by individual learners in small town community**
- **Usual problems of part-time work – paid only per contact hours**
- **Inadequate training and no core curriculum to follow**
- **Shortage of places to teach in a permanent place**
- **Shortage of materials for numeracy and maths but the situation is improving all the time**
- **Students dropping out after a holiday period. Shortage of teaching materials – this year for the first time as very basic material are required**
- **Sometimes one feels that there is no way of knowing if tuition is beneficial to pupil. But pupil still returns – that is good**
- **Student had serious learning blockage – left school at 7 yrs of age as well as other personal and family problems.**
- **I think specific texts should be available to students rather than a heap of photocopies**
- **Present student regularly a half hour late**
- **Not enough time to look at available resources. I sometimes feel we're all reinventing the wheel**
- **Lack of books etc in most locations**
- **The quality of photocopied material poor – hard to decipher letters**
- **Nothing to date**
- **Restrictions on available tuition time – students can only access 2 hrs (max) per week**
- **Communication problems – violent outbursts**
- **The student comes to me on a part-time basis. He has a learning blockage**

- **I think material is available but accessing it. One idea would be online resource room – where could download worksheets which would be organised by subject/ topic, e.g. could be on NALA website or local class site**
- **A certain amount of 2/3/ but problems were sorted**
- **At present I am working with travellers who are paid to attend classes and sometimes there is no motivation. I find it very difficult in these circumstances**
- **Students not placed in classes appropriate to their skills / lack of skills**
- **The centre closes for almost 4 months in the summer. It is very bad for our beginners**
- **No follow up once you complete the training**
- **Sometimes hard to motivate myself due to tiredness after work**
- **Isolation due to working on my own at different centres**
- **Absenteeism within the group disrupts continuity**
- **My students biggest problem is retention**
- **Very little suitable material available**
- **Continuity , system (male female) very few male. Klear gets women initially for self-assertion courses and things follow on from there**
- **Through illness I had to leave one student. I feel I failed him because he did not continue his study – he may have slipped through the net**
- **Lack of work being done between classes**
- **Life was difficult until we got proper premises – rather isolated before then**

During your time as a literacy/basic education tutor have you helped your student(s) in any ways other than initial literacy tuition?

If yes, what kind of things have you done?

- **Shopping sometimes and general support**
- **Help to develop Life skills and the counselling of students about problems**
- **Little things e.g. Lift home, books for grandchild**
- **Hopefully to increase more self worth + confidence**
- **In getting social welfare problems sorted out, rent allowance, problems with teachers etc**
- **Helped them applying for jobs/promotion and followed through with skills necessary for job**
- **I have found that students confidence has developed much more**
- **I believe I helped my student ‘open up’ more about his past and issues relating to his learning difficulties**
- **Job placement, training courses, further education**
- **Listening to problems (personal)**
- **Build confidence in other areas e.g. speaking out, taking a new course**
- **I feel I helped to boost his confidence**
- **Conversation skills, listening skills, all leads to personal development**
- **I feel I have given my student more confidence as a person in their workplace + in everyday life. She has also started to read books in her spare time, which she never did before**
- **Student needed advice and support in a personal matter. I gave all support, advice, follow up I could**
- **I taught a one-to-one student the rules of the road, and he took up driving (his choice)**

- **Filling forms - help with social welfare problems**
- **Helping people to write letters, i.e. personal, social welfare etc**
- **Helped people apply for social welfare entitlements , did out their cv's and applied for jobs**
- **Helped with mathematical skills specific to students job. Helped with understanding financial matters e.g. Mortgage + credit union business**
- **Referred students for further training/employment assistance**
- **Self esteem – bus stops and money**
- **Filled up forms helped with letters for job applications medical cards**
- **Encouraged some students to do Junior Cert/ enter competitions (Creative Writing) and continue with adult education**
- **Improved students self esteem and feeling of worth**
- **I have believed the students have developed personally**
- **Practical skills – making a phone call; make up – fashion – singing. Colouring**
- **Listened to some old painful experiences and hopefully tried to bring some sense of closure to them**
- **Encouraging a young lady to go back full time to education and supported her in her efforts afterwards**
- **Not yet but working on confidence, cv and jobs**
- **Encouraged them to take other tests – car, junior cert, work – i.e. aptitude tests for promotion etc**
- **Provided encouragement and helped to build confidence**
- **Helped people to build self esteem which equips them with confidence to pursue personal development goals**
- **Helped him to be successful in gaining employment**
- **Person wanting to learn a particular restaurant menu ,rules of the road, words / spellings connected with computers**
- **Done cv's, helped person understand betting slips**
- **Talking about everyday things. I have a young man who is in a wheelchair and loves football**
- **They have asked my advice on other matters and problems that they have, and I have given them my opinion**
- **To look up and find words in dictionary**
- **Learning to drive**
- **I might have helped increase the self confidence of the student**
- **Listened to problems etc . tried to avoid giving any definite advice but tried to help**
- **My student did his exams NCVA and was very successful**
- **Helped with official form filling and social problems**
- **I believe I have led some to have more self-confidence and trust in themselves**
- **Organised library visit**
- **Encouraging them to explore other learning opportunities**
- **Provided a listening ear to personal problems. Used my personal knowledge to give encouragement and advice**
- **My pupil, who has severe medical problems, wants to be able to work , so I am helping her with Business English**
- **Prepared him for driving test (passed t.g.)**
- **Using the atm**
- **Referral to other agencies + tuition in back aromatherapy (help with course)**
- **Life skills, general dealings (communications) in a variety of situations,**

- **How to use a calculator**
- **Listened to social and domestic concerns. Arranged for further fulltime study**
- **My student has stated that he is more confident about reading from signs, television. He has embarked upon travel as a result of tuition**
- **Helped with job application – form filling and advice on interview technique**
- **Introduced living and general skills in dealing with difficulties**
- **Acted as advocate re his disability**
- **Building confidence to use skills she already had**
- **Affirming their learning and encouraging them to take part in other education opportunities**
- **Taught keyboard skills. Supported student with junior cert preparation**
- **Have helped to develop the student's confidence and self worth. Have encouraged students to push themselves and strive for what they didn't believe themselves capable of**
- **With all my students I have noticed a marked increase in self esteem and confidence and have also noticed an increase in their general knowledge**
- **Confidence building for himself**
- **Advised the move to junior cert English. Also I think literacy tuition does not and should not exist in a vacuum – people need to share their fears about themselves and their 'place' in society**
- **Supporting a distance learning course**
- **With projects for courses**
- **Was involved in drama, on a basic level**
- **Hopefully by encouragement to have confidence in themselves + to move on**
- **I have worked with a student doing Junior Cert Maths and students learning computers**
- **Filling forms. Preparing for driving test**
- **Attended functions. Junior cert passes. Vouching as a reference for jobs**
- **Helped him write letters to a friend**
- **Taught them dancing and games**
- **Made student more socially aware**
- **Introduced them to drama / relaxation exercises / pe**
- **Building up their self confidence**
- **I feel students have gained confidence, improved self esteem and lost their fear of words**
- **Hopefully helped their self confidence**
- **Help with interview techniques. Helped organise birthday party**
- **Self confidence encouragement to attempt other courses / challenges**
- **It has always been things that follow on from literacy, e.g. crafts, knitting, cooking. Meeting for coffee, being with them when they use their new skills outside of the centre**
- **Intense preparation for driving test. Planned holidays etc**
- **Helped increase self-confidence, encouraged further learning, increased student's awareness of the world**
- **I do relaxation classes**
- **Help with filling in farming forms**
- **I'm at end of phone anytime, any day**
- **Cv writing; job preparation; counselling**

- **Helped them in becoming more confident in their daily lives; through teaching and through listening to their stories and through being there for them as a concerned friend**
- **Increased (I hope) self confidence and self esteem**
- **Acquiring access to courses**
- **Get info re job**
- **Increased their self confidence**
- **Attempted to build general confidence levels**
- **Discussion on topics of mutual interest to boost self - confidence**
- **Helped to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence**
- **I have tried to instil confidence and develop a more positive attitude so that she is open to the possibilities of life**
- **Preparation for driving test**
- **Several of the students have increased their self-confidence. Some have gone into fulltime employment. Others have furthered their education in other places**
- **Hope that the student has become more confident**
- **Social skills**
- **Helped with family problems, financial problems, encouragement and support. Helped to boost self-image**
- **Written letters – met informally as friends – kept contact open over long periods – information/ access – help on family matters**
- **Introduction to computers and library**
- **At the moment I am helping my student to cook. Shopping and food preparation.**
- **Basic maths**
- **Confidence building + listening**
- **Prepared them for driving tests – made sure adults who never voted were capable of doing so correctly**
- **My pupil has four young children and as a teacher I have advised himself and his wife on school starting age, computer software etc**
- **Filling in cheques, bank forms**
- **Helped to get medical care, and x-rays**
- **Introduced basic computer skills – a little in math problem solving**
- **My students have identified consumer awareness and health and safety in the workplace as areas they wish to pursue**
- **Building self confidence, helping study skills, creative writing, job application techniques etc**
- **Offered support (family problems)**
- **CV preparation, explaining benefit systems etc**
- **Confidence building. Encouraging students to take up other classes / courses, informal guidance counselling**
- **I teach junior cert level English to groups who come through the literacy scheme. This provides a goal for these students and I encourage them to aim to do the leaving cert, which is also available in the scheme**
- **Confidence. Helped her to drive into city and shop in big stores. She feels that she is the same as everybody else when she can read and write**
- **Introduced computers and creative writing**
- **Filling forms / writing letters**
- **Encouraged one person to apply for a job as a carer. She was successful. Have given students confidence in themselves and their abilities**
- **Generally boosting their confidence**

- **Use of dictionary, telephone book. Observation of shop fronts, notices etc**
- **Opened bank account with them**
- **Encouraged to join vec program**
- **I give him books. I read first and think are enjoyable and easy to read in order to encourage an inclusive relationship. I keep an eye out for books and knowledge to try and find a simplistic approach**
- **We started maths as it was a pressing need at the time**
- **Increased self confidence**
- **Numeracy songs, poems, prayers, geography**
- **All sorts. Psych-help, personal advice, etc**
- **I have encouraged my first student to seek employment and it has helped her greatly – a great boost to her confidence. Her literacy was really v.v.v. good, didn't need help but her confidence was greatly diminished by another adult who kept putting her down. Present student has become more confident and now reads the paper when in work**
- **Thoughts on future career**
- **Lifts home: visits to local interesting places: advice i.e. Listening to any problems: confidence boosting etc**
- **Listen to him and help rendered by advice e.g. To seek spiritual + medical assistance**
- **Personal problems**
- **Basic maths (+, -, x, /) use of calculator in particular percentages %**
- **I have mentioned that the irregularities of English are often to blame for poor spelling. I feel this helps the student to have more confidence**
- **Prepared students for OCR examinations. Helped students prepare and deliver wedding speech**
- **She spoke to me on personal matters. I listened and helped as best I could**
- **I have given him some self-confidence to work through programmes on spelling on computer and he does this now on his own**
- **Helped with filling out forms they use at work. Coached someone facing a job interview**
- **A listening ear, flexible**
- **I keep in contact with my students by phone, I have met them for coffee/lunch, some of them have been to my home, also to my mothers and other events e.g. church sale of work**
- **Helped to instil confidence and to be more positive about their own skills and capabilities**
- **Have helped her to design and layout her curriculum vitae and helped her to operate computer package**

If yes what reason(s) were there for the matching being unsuccessful?

Other

- **I have had students drop out but I don't think that was the organisers fault**
- **Student was suffering from depression**
- **Difficult to judge –just two ladies who were looking for help putting together a project and wanting typing skills, which I hadn't. I advised them where to go.**

- **Student had learning disability + was very unhappy with life in general. She was very disruptive + felt I should give her my undivided attention at all times**
- **Student became over familiar**
- **Student ill**
- **Student wasn't capable of getting here (mentally/socially). She was living in a centre**
- **Intermittent attendance. Attended if friends were also in attendance**
- **Never really established students needs (foreign student)**
- **Male student – he was feeling lonely after a bereavement and read more into the one to one session**
- **Student – very busy – frequently absent**
- **Student felt she was too advanced for class**
- **The students problems were such that he needed specialised assistance to help him**
- **Never had interest – had been forced into attending classes**
- **Student didn't start of his own free will**
- **Student had major problems, was not ready, had a problem with a female tutor**
- **Student was a special needs student who should have been in a rehab situation**

Before you became a tutor have you had experience of:

Any jobs which have been useful in basic education

- **Pre-school worker**
- **Trade union secretary**
- **Helped young people with special needs (voluntary)**
- **Taught children at pre school level. Involved with children doing drama/art and craft and music for fun**
- **Homework with my own children**
- **Some teaching/training experience**
- **National school teacher – special needs**
- **Sometimes my job requires design and delivery of training courses, presentations etc. some of the principles are similar, irrespective of the abilities of the audience.**
- **Chemical engineer, by profession, worked in training + development of adults but generally at higher education**
- **Dealing with the public through surveys (statistics)**
- **Training of computer programmers**
- **Training manager in a food company dealing with literacy issues for some employees**
- **My own children**
- **I am a retired primary school teacher**
- **Both my children are dyslexic**
- **Teaching a class of 13 year olds in secondary school to read and write**
- **I am a primary school teacher with experience in teaching EFL and in Remedial Education**
- **My own children**
- **Working with Youthreach for the last 10 years**
- **Developing and delivering technical training programs**

- **B.A. and H.Dip In Ed Diploma in compensatory and Remedial Education**
- **I am a playschool leader for 9 years now**
- **Ive worked as a Home Support and Class room assistant for children with special needs**
- **Trained teacher with special needs experience**
- **Only my own children**
- **12 years teaching in vocational school**
- **Instructing groups of employees on new work procedures**
- **Pre school, leader in scouts so was aware of the different capabilities of each child**
- **I teach craft in the travelling community**
- **I am a playschool assistant (patience) and the ability to work at the students pace**
- **I work in the area of Community Development and often work with groups involved in basic education**
- **Full time teaching**
- **Nursing tutor**
- **Teaching English to foreign children**
- **I have been a foster mother, with one of my children with learning difficulties**
- **Nursing**
- **Secondary school teaching**
- **Qualified teacher Maths and Special needs**
- **Facilitator and trainer**
- **I am a primary school teacher**
- **Voluntary work with a charitable organisation (Society of St. Vincent De Paul)**
- **Third level lecturing**
- **Basic computers**
- **Given grinds to students (2nd level, third level)**
- **I came from a working class neighbourhood in Chicago and paid for my university training by working as a waitress, so I know something about people's everyday lives**
- **I taught Religious Education to students while I was in school**
- **Helping my own children**
- **Teaching English to foreign students**
- **Giving grinds to kids, training adults in the workplace (new systems, new processes, etc)**
- **Worked in a playschool**
- **I worked for a number of years as a volunteer with mod mentally handicapped children**
- **Sub teacher in local primary schools. Worked with publisher**
- **I am a speech and language therapist**
- **Personnel manager**
- **I am a classroom assistant – my son has learning difficulties**
- **Rearing a family**
- **Primary school teaching**
- **Primary school teaching / special needs teaching**
- **Montessori teacher**
- **Secondary teaching**
- **Teaching students at work (physiotherapist)**
- **Higher diploma in education**

- **Training adults in new computer system in a factory**
- **Working in a shop**
- **Teaching**
- **Supervisor including CE Schemes**
- **Did sub primary teaching in an unqualified capacity many years ago**
- **Teaching children ages 5 – 13 yrs**
- **National school teacher**
- **Primary/remedial teacher in primary school**
- **Worked as a parent trainer**
- **Teaching line dancing for 8 months**
- **Doing homework with my children and helping their friends with maths**
- **Teaching my own children**
- **Montessori teaching assistant**
- **Helping children with homework**
- **Involved with teaching children with disabilities how to pony ride**
- **Have taught @ 2nd level, currently teach @ 3rd level. Have taught in 3rd world country- Sierra Leone**
- **I have shorthand and typing skills which I feel are a help for understanding letter/sound, group letters and word groups plus spelling patterns**

Which of the following improvements would you like to see happen within your own scheme?

Other

- **More room should be available**
- **workshop**
- **Our scheme very good now with good materials + computer – photocopier – phone. Keeping in touch with similar groups**
- **More space for scheme, library and resource room to contain all materials and photocopier –available at all teaching times to tutors, more hours for organisers**
- **More specific training e.g. in dyslexia, some psychology/sociology**
- **On site crèche improved terms and conditions e.g. sick pay, holiday pay**
- **More students and more time spent by each student**
- **More appraisal, ongoing training, more chance to talk to other tutors on an organised basis**
- **More engagement with other organisations to make more people who require the service aware, i.e.fas**
- **Backing from more experienced tutors, provide structure for tutor**
- **More privacy**
- **Why not have student meetings – surely more valuable? Again less time spent on meetings and more on students**
- **Computers (laptops)**
- **Premises is good but we could use more space, computers**
- **More tutor spaces, videos?**
- **Tutor meetings**
- **I would love to see a 10 week, 2 hours daily for 4 days class**
- **More modern resources – camcorder (especially for NCVA), Computers with spelling software**
- **Easier if only one team in a room**
- **Once a month informal meeting with other tutors**

- **If you are prepared to train to increase your skills you shouldn't lose your pay**
- **Parking discs – its costing me a small fortune**
- **I would like to see more access to computer learning skills**
- **Separate rooms for adults doing Junior Cert/Leaving Cert exams. Adults are not comfortable sitting with juniors/ children while doing exams. A number of students have not done the exam for this reason**

In your opinion, should all tutors be given the opportunity to study for an accredited certificate or diploma programme in adult basic education?

Give Reason(s)

- **Confidence building**
- **Would give more confidence and authority**
- **Importance of measuring teaching ability. Qualifications would give them more confidence**
- **There are a lot of people who need help with their reading and writing**
- **It would give us confidence in our abilities and methods of teaching**
- **I think it is good in that it may open up employment prospects for tutors and help them in their tutoring as it has for me**
- **Increase their own self-confidence and perhaps improve their teaching skills**
- **Be given the opportunity to gain accreditation, but not forced. It would benefit students and also enhance the tutors skills and improve confidence**
- **We must constantly improve our skills and be exposed to the best and newest methods so that we can help the community to the best of our abilities**
- **As a recognition of the experience/training tutors do on an ongoing basis. In order to formalise our qualifications**
- **The more training tutors attend the more efficient and effective they become**
- **If the service is to receive increased state funding accreditation required + uniformity of teaching standards**
- **As the schemes grow and develop accreditation will be necessary for all tutors. It will increase tutor skills and their range of teaching abilities**
- **The opportunity – yes – but should not be pressured into doing so – otherwise you will lose some very valuable older members of the tutor section who might not be interested in further study**
- **Only if they wish to**
- **They are all developing skills so they deserve accreditation**
- **It would benefit the scheme. It would lead, perhaps, to better and more satisfied tutors**
- **Enable tutors with an interest in developing their skills to study formally. Possible option to go on to do paid work at some stage with accredited qualifications**
- **It would assure a structured programme and a pool of resources and teaching aids**
- **For their own confidence**
- **An accredited cert would reward tutors for all the hard work they put into classes**

- **Tutors should be given opportunity to study modules of cert or diploma course, which will mean a better service will be given by tutors**
- **Would like a diploma in adult basic education**
- **Some tutors feel the need to have accreditation**
- **Self-confidence**
- **To give them skills needed but not just for the accreditation which I suspect is what is happening**
- **Because it benefits both tutor and student**
- **I think it would benefit the students and increase the confidence of the tutors who wish to avail of it**
- **They should at least be given the option**
- **If tutors wish to go further in adult education they should be given the opportunity**
- **If they want to, but not an obligation**
- **Opportunity not obligation**
- **4 Saturday mornings are too short to take in all that's required**
- **To understand the abilities of each student and have patience with same**
- **Validation of qualification might make tutoring more attractive for wider community**

- **Networking with other tutors and formal training can only improve the service**
- **Would be helpful with teaching students with ability to progress to further education**
- **This would depend at what level the tutor wishes to teach, also not everyone would be interested in doing this**
- **Would increase the awareness of the importance of adult Literacy and would ensure that people undertaking tutoring would be properly trained for the task**
- **A very definite need for more tutors and well trained tutors to improve service provided**
- **It would put it on a more professional footing – students would benefit**
- **Increased confidence in their own skills**
- **It could not do any harm and may do some good. It could provide a goal for the tutor.**
- **It would give new tutors more confidence in their own abilities**
- **If they so wish. Why not!**
- **Yes we all need recognition and encouragement and also to ensure tutoring standards are maintained**
- **It would enable the tutor to avail of full time work**
- **If optional it might improve standards**
- **((1) Enables tutor to increase skills whilst being a validation of time spent o such course (2) would provide recognised standard/level of quality training**
- **In order for you to be a good tutor you need to be aware of other teaching methods and materials that are available**
- **If they are interested**
- **Their skills and efforts should be valued and encouraged – reward for hard work**
- **To standardise training**
- **I think it would put more pressure on the Department to give more funding to take in 1 to 1 tutors. Would ensure all students county and city received the same standard of tutoring**

- **Programs should be available for those wishing to improve skills**
- **To enhance leaning and for further study**
- **Important for tutor confidence and new approaches. Good to be a learner also for a while**
- **If they wish to for their own personal development**
- **While I dot believe it is necessary for all tutors I think opportunities in adult education should be available**
- **Gave good grounding in area but actual experience teaches much more. Constant training on a regular basis is essential as everyone is different and new knowledge and skills helps me to prepare for class work**
- **I didn't have time when I was younger because of family commitments**
- **Tutors need the confidence that an accredited course provides as they then assume with their results that they are hopefully on the right track**
- **If a cert or diploma makes a person more confident – fine. Personally I don't think it necessary**
- **To increase knowledge and build confidence**
- **Only if they want to do it themselves**
- **No harm in the opportunity being there but not mandatory**
- **Some tutors would enjoy**
- **Yes, for those who would like it , but as long as it would not cause dissent with those who as happy as they are**
- **It is a personal decision – yes for some / no for others**
- **Adults with literacy problems have already been failed by teaching professionals. Can barely trained volunteers consistently help them recover so much lost ground**
- **To motivate their confidence**
- **To ensure certain levels of training are met**
- **Certification would give a more teacher/pupil status rather than mentor/friend**
- **(1) As a step to paid position (2) Should improve facilities and standardise teaching**
- **Self development and everyone has a goal**
- **These days more qualifications and certificates are needed but not to negate those who have natural ability to communicate their skills to others**
- **Would improve the tutoring skills of tutors and give them more self-confidence. It would also increase their commitment to ABE**
- **They deserve it**
- **It would give due recognition to their work**
- **Should they so wish, the opportunity should be available for them**
- **Those who wish to**
- **I believe literacy tutoring has not yet achieved the recognition it deserves in Ireland. Final accreditation would boost status of tutors**
- **To make them better able to help their learner**
- **Why not? Lets have the option**
- **Most tutors would like to gain some sort of recognition, i.e. certificate or diploma**
- **Tutors need to study all the strategies and tools available for teaching adults**
- **Backing of a certificate or diploma would certainly help us have confidence in ourselves**
- **I feel it would deter volunteers**
- **It would be good for confidence (of tutor) and so for student**

- **To maintain good standards and self development**
- **I agree with the above statement and I am currently studying for the B.A. degree course by Distance Education**
- **Would give students confidence**
- **Gives value to your work**
- **I feel it would be a great incentive**
- **Any available opportunities should be offered – no course is ever a waste**
- **I don't think its necessary however each tutor have their own ideas**
- **Let the tutors make the choice**
- **To give tutor increased confidence**
- **This is voluntary work**
- **Tutors would have more interest**
- **To provide a more in-depth knowledge of tutoring**
- **At present the adhoc nature of this work should be done away with and a better structured career path should be developed**
- **Group work, lesson planning would benefit everyone**
- **It would help the tutors and give them more skills to accomplish the task and to cope with difficulties which arise**
- **Accreditation is important to some people – they should have the choice**
- **Because it would give great credence to their qualification more direction and purpose**
- **This is a qualified yes. In my current work capacity I would not have the time (or energy) to pursue such a qualification. I already have a degree and, for example if such accreditation became mandatory, I would not be in a position to pursue it.**
- **I feel such a programme would help tutors become more effective in their training**
- **If a tutor takes time off to study for an accredited cert or diploma he or she deserves to be paid which would eliminate the voluntary aspect and then NALA would lose the dedication and good will that voluntary tutors impart to their pupils. It would be like a formal school where many teachers just teach for money only**
- **Create more awareness of need for formal adult education – more commitment would realise value of adult education**
- **Since more financial resources are being allocated to centre, tutors are going to have to be more accountable and already give a lot of time to the schemes**
- **Recognition from groups wishing to engage tutors would be greater**
- **For those of us working in the education field it would help our CV. Also it acknowledges and validates our commitment**
- **I think that adult education is vital and as such should be recognised and given due status in ed. System**
- **It's a road I intend to go. I believe to give the best, you have to be the best**
- **Having taught students on the basic tutor learning course you realise there are lots of areas that you would like to be covered in greater detail**
- **Yes, if they wish to gain accreditation they should have opportunity. It gives some tutors more confidence in themselves**
- **Because accreditation seems to be the way scheme development is going, it may give tutors confidence in their ability and skills**
- **Unable to comment**
- **This would ensure quality of service for students**

- **It would give confidence to tutors that they are doing it right. Tutoring adults is a little isolating. Would be nice to be sure**
- **Increase in skills acquired. Further education/development always beneficial**
- **Keeps tutors interested, encourages sharing of ideas between tutors**
- **If that is what the individual wants – however making it a prerequisite would not work**
- **Motivates and keeps interest**
- **All tutors interested in gaining an accredited cert should be accommodated**
- **But it should be purely voluntary as for some people further studies might put them off**
- **Not necessary for a good tutor but training most important**
- **If tutors volunteer their time and effort then there is obviously a good interest and commitment there which could be furthered**
- **Tutor may feel more qualified to participate and it would be a broader introduction to adult ed**
- **I feel it would open up more doors to other activities**
- **Because it is likely in not too distant future ABE tutors will need official accreditation to be allowed to tutor adults**
- **Teachers are trained to teach (4 year courses). It would certainly help tutors in their job**
- **Additional accreditation when justified is welcome, also accreditation helps to standardise teaching procedures and generally increases teaching expertise**

Would you be interested in studying for such a course?

Give Reason(s)

- **Interested generally**
- **Although I am a qualified teacher I feel that a specific course in basic adult educ. would help me to focus more clearly on the needs of adults as opposed to teenagers. I also believe that if a service is offered, the people providing the service should be as qualified as possible**
- **Probably**
- **For self improvement**
- **I now have the time and commitment to give it**
- **I think I may be a little old (nearly 62)**
- **For self improvement**
- **Currently Studying WIT course**
- **It would help me improve my own skills**
- **Everyone is always capable of learning more**
- **To make myself a more efficient tutor and to get more confidence in my work, as a result**
- **To increase personal skills, familiarisation with widely used learning concepts, tools + proven practice. To develop + implement a 'standard' in training**
- **I would start off with greater confidence**
- **Additional accreditation when justified is welcome, also accreditation helps to standardise teaching procedures and generally increases teaching expertise**
- **I would like to teach on a fulltime basis**

- **I like doing it one night a week but don't feel that it would suit me as a more permanent career**
- **Lack of time to devote to such a course. I would be interested provided it could be done over a manageable period of time**
- **Would possibly be interested in a career change in the future**
- **Given my age i'm satisfied at the level i'm at now**
- **Am already working on accredited work in group work**
- **I have plenty of qualifications in the area**
- **Self advancement**
- **I'm interested in the literacy scheme and I have the time**
- **At my age (66) not really enthusiastic**
- **I didn't offer any time in order to study further**
- **But not at the moment – I need to complete 1 year first**
- **I believe literacy tutoring has not yet achieved the recognition it deserves in Ireland. Final accreditation would boost status of tutors**
- **Keeps tutors interested, encourages sharing of ideas between tutors**
- **At present – due to other commitments**
- **Because id feel more qualified in teaching basic skills to people who maybe totally illiterate**
- **Recognition of tutors skills**
- **I am at present doing a numeracy project – I have already done 'group work' and initial training – I feel that being involved with 'Literacy' for such a long time – its nice to have the opportunity of getting an accreditation**
- **I'm interested in any step which would improve me as a tutor**
- **To become a more capable tutor!**
- **Feel it would be helpful for my own confidence in dealing with different levels of ability in the future**
- **Yes – it would be great to have a qualification within this area**
- **Not enough time!**
- **Would like to increase my understanding and skills**
- **To deal with extra problems that do arise**
- **I'm too old at 53 but one time id have really loved it**
- **I feel it would be of benefit to my students and I would be interested in getting more involved in literacy**
- **Not prepared at this stage to study for exams**
- **I always feel that since each student is at a totally different level I cannot possibly meet their educational needs to the fullest extent I would like**
- **If they want to. Me, i'm retired and have enough to do as it is! Also I have enough diplomas and qualifications, don't need/want anymore**
- **I work as a resource teacher in a primary school so i'm fairly busy and could not afford the time**
- **Yes – to improve myself and become a better tutor. However due to family commitments, I do not have the free time that I enjoyed when I did the training**
- **Already doing one**
- **You're never too old to learn**
- **It seems to be the way forward. It would be very unfair if those of us involved in tutoring were overlooked because of lack of accreditation**
- **Need to clarify my own thinking and to express in concrete terms what is often intuitive**
- **To obtain a certificate in adult basic education**

- **We hear of 'lifelong learning' for the student. This should also apply too to the tutors. We also learn more by attending courses and meeting tutors from other schemes. Tutors can share information/ideas/resources as a result and this also helps with the work. Tutors can also give advice on particular problems we encounter while working with the students**
- **I feel such a course could only improve my own skills**
- **I think all courses are achievements for tutors and , more skill and education can only improve my own skill to be a better tutor and therefore will be better for future students**
- **Again, a qualified yes. Broadly I am in favour of such a course, though it would need careful thought as to both structure and content. In particular, I would put great emphasis on (a) the specific education needs/ concerns of adults and also (b) practical application in a classroom (or 1 to 1) situation**
- **But not at present due to other commitments**
- **I can only see myself working on a voluntary basis**
- **Time permitting**
- **Time off should be given to do the course**
- **I am studying for my degree**
- **I would in the future but not at the moment due to other commitments. It would be good to have all the work validated**
- **It would assure a structured programme and a pool of resources and teaching aids**
- **Yes I would be very interested in studying such a course, If I hadn't started and completed one year of B.A. Degree course**
- **As part of a stepped career structure**
- **I am beyond the age. I am interested in use of computers in literacy**
- **I would feel better able to teach adults**
- **For me as organiser I don't see the need . other reasons lack of time am involved in other things**
- **Not at the moment but I would be interested in doing so in the future**
- **It would give me more confidence**
- **I feel it would give me a sense of achievement that is recognised**
- **I am starting a group work course with NALA next month**
- **To further my own understanding of peoples needs and how best to be of some constructive help to students in assessing and fulfilling students needs + requirements**
- **I only want to volunteer not interested in getting paid**
- **4 Saturday mornings are too short to take in all that's required**
- **I would like to have more experience before studying for an accreditation or diploma**
- **To keep up with current research**
- **Would help to give some structure to overall development plan for student**
- **I don't have enough time**
- **Very little free time**
- **Would enjoy the accomplishment**
- **To make them better able to help their learner**
- **It would depend on the course being offered**
- **Am currently on such a course**
- **No time!**
- **To help with my tutoring and as a sense of accomplishment**

- **I think all tutors will have to be accredited in the future**
- **Age**
- **So that at some stage I could be employed as a Basic Education tutor and have a better understanding of how Adults Learn and assist them in that learning**
- **Interested in any training that will enrich my practice**
- **Too old!**
- **I have already successfully completed two modules. I enjoyed the challenge and look forward to doing further modules. The course work was most beneficial and the input from other participants was interesting and enlightening**
- **Am fulltime tutor and may need accreditation to hold on to job if professionalisation continues to expand**
- **I don't have time I am satisfied as it is**
- **To improve my skills**
- **Increased knowledge in this area**
- **Not interested in going any further**
- **I completed part 1 of the Cert and found it very helpful**
- **I already have a teaching degree**
- **I have a lifetime credential from the state of California, many years experience and am now age 61**
- **No time at present**
- **Recognised competence in adult education**
- **Only if it was on a part time evening basis as I work full time**
- **I'm only interested in helping others to do the very basic reading and spelling**
- **To improve my current skills**
- **I am presently doing NCEA tutoring course through WIT/NALA**
- **I enjoy the work and I would like to become more involved in the design and delivery of programmes for adults**
- **Too busy! And too old!!**
- **Not at this stage**
- **My available time is limited**
- **It would give confidence to tutors that they are doing it right. Tutoring adults is a little isolating. Would be nice to be sure**
- **To better myself and improve my skills for dealing with literacy students**
- **Too busy. Am in adult education as student myself**
- **Not at the moment – am a fulltime primary teacher**
- **Some qualification will be needed in the future to avail of paid tuition**
- **To understand the theory involved in Adult Education on a wider scale at present**
- **To enhance leaning and for further study**
- **I am studying for this course because I want to improve my skills and sharpen my mind**
- **I feel I have the knowledge and experience**
- **I am quite elderly and happy the way I am!**
- **Maybe when I have more experience of tutoring and would wish to explore the area or not**
- **No, not at the moment, I believe in a love of learning**
- **I want to make effective use of my time and my students time**
- **At the moment I don't have the time but may take advantage of a course at some later date**

- **It would perhaps reveal areas that I had not yet explored. It would make me feel more 'legit'**
- **Not at preset. Already studying at night, but when this is finished – yes.**
- **Not at present due to time constraints but would possibly be in the future depending on course content and accreditation body.**
- **Yes, as it would give me a formal qualification and it would help me, my student and other students**

Do you believe that fulltime group tutor positions should be provided in each scheme?

Give Reasons

- **If demand was there – yes**
- **Students would benefit**
- **To facilitate students time constraints**
- **It would make the courses more accessible to students**
- **There is strength in numbers and the confidence of individuals is vastly increased**
- **Could be beneficial in some situations**
- **Could achieve better results in educating the students**
- **In order to continue with a set programme for the students**
- **(1) High demand always for tuition – not enough tutors – full time positions would (a) be an incentive to increase time tutoring (b) would be a way of valuing and remunerating tutors**
- **On a voluntary scheme, it is difficult to offer more than 2 hours to a student per week**
- **The full time tutors should be fully qualified**
- **Yes if there are enough students to use up those full time hours**
- **Because the need is there. There's too much reliance on voluntary one to one tuition**
- **Only fulltime tutors can ensure continuity and monitoring of progress**
- **To assist part-time tutors and give advice**
- **Better access and dealing with paperwork**
- **If students are available and interested**
- **If needed**
- **There is a need for them in some schemes**
- **For continuity – both for tutor and students**
- **To give students full access to improve their skills**
- **Because some students might like group sessions and fulltime might suit them**
- **Only if there is a requirement**
- **It helps to have fulltime tutors to take on groups or those who need long-term help. I still believe that voluntary tuition is also desirable**
- **Some people require more than 1 hr per week**
- **As backup**
- **If a group wanted it, it should be there**
- **There are more volunteers available if on a part time basis**
- **Don't know. No ideas one way or the other**
- **Would depend on the scheme. Would not be acceptable in our scheme. But for other schemes who need them yes.**
- **If there is a need and it would actually benefit the scheme**

- **Avoid losing good tutors, continuity, building experience**
- **It would depend on the situation in scheme**
- **Need for ongoing curricular development**
- **For consistency and a more professional approach – though not exclusively full-time tutors**
- **As well as some students gaining from group tutoring, socially they enjoy it**
- **Students should be able to move easily from 1:1 to group tuition**
- **Yes if tutor has received more formal training than the basic induction course**
- **It should not be so dependent on volunteers**
- **Yes if there's a demand within a scheme for a lot of group sessions it should have fulltime group tutors**
- **They would form the solid base on which to develop schemes but I would be afraid they might just regard their position as a job and lose the enthusiasm to help people**
- **The students coming to Literacy Schemes have diverse needs i.e. some have no reading skills, others have some skills, but their needs must come first so tutors have to be flexible**
- **Would provide continuity**
- **To provide continuity**
- **(1) for support (2) because Adult Literacy deserves funding (3) there is unlikely to be sufficient volunteers**
- **Because of the increase in the number of students**
- **I'd prefer to have a greater number of part-time tutors rather than perhaps a few fulltime**
- **It would depend on the set-up of the scheme**
- **Perhaps it might lead to a more coordinated approach**
- **Given the time there is a tremendous amount of work that could be done e.g. instead of completing 1 module in NCVA 3 or 4 modules could be integrated thereby adding interest and motivation and giving the student further accommodation**
- **Fulltime group tutor positions give great continuity and confidence to students, in my opinion**
- **With students in a group, at different levels, extra preparation and follow up would be needed. Volunteers may not have the time to devote to this**
- **Not required in rural area – generally**
- **Provided the scheme sees a need**
- **Our group is too small to need a fulltime teacher**
- **With specified reference to our scheme – group tutoring is a non runner (Rural area – difficult even to get students on a one-to-one because of stigma)**
- **More students would benefit**
- **Many people must be free for fulltime learning e.g. senior citizens who didn't do Leaving Cert and would like to**
- **2 hrs is not enough for most people**
- **some students may prefer this and benefit from it**
- **I feel there is not a need for it in every scheme**
- **For organisers – the need is there , there is need for development of new programmes, e.g. workplace literacy, family literacy etc.**
- **This may improve public image of scheme and help cope with dire need for tutors. Also some students may like challenge of group work**

- **Fulltime tutors can offer continuation and more than one class per week if needed by students**
- **Unsure if there is enough students to warrant fulltime tutors**
- **It would depend on the type of student and the needs at the time**
- **To facilitate the learners and enable the centre to provide a better service**
- **In my position I have no overview of level of needs/demand on our literacy scheme**
- **Many students develop better in group rather than individual learning environment**
- **Some learners need much more than 1-2 hours per week particularly the younger ones who need to improve their literacy skills in order to**
- **I feel that maybe better continuity might be of advantage to the students**
- **Don't know enough about the above to answer the question**
- **Not everyone is comfortable on a one to one basis**
- **Increase the availability of tutors for students e.g. day time tutors**
- **To provide more momentum, continuity and cohesiveness to schemes**
- **Only in a leadership status**
- **Because there is an urgent need to deal with this difficult area**
- **A fulltime tutor would be available more frequently than a volunteer and could be of assistance**
- **Yes it would encourage more students to study further**
- **If there is sufficient demand for them and provided there is sufficient funding for salary and teaching aids**
- **Someone to contact about problems**
- **The need is there**
- **Present staff have not got enough time**
- **There is a high problem of reading and writing difficulties in this country**
- **It would presumably help coordination and organisation**
- **More could be achieved if more hours could be put in over a shorter period of time**
- **Most students lose interest when they have to do homework**
- **They would be resourceful**
- **Because the present part time system works very well in our scheme**
- **We hope to develop same here**
- **Scheme too small**
- **More students may be catered for**
- **Volunteer tutors can be dedicated but have pulls in other directions and students can lose out**
- **Some students may need it**
- **Having experienced how disadvantaged some students are – almost illiterate – I realised a huge input in tutoring is necessary**
- **Don't know – I like the idea of voluntary groups and introducing payment might alter the ethos**
- **To offer continuity to the scheme, also many volunteers have other fulltime commitments and are unable to attend meetings or training days**
- **Students really need more than two hours teaching per week. Where there are large numbers of students, fulltime group tutors could provide classes at different times to accommodate a larger number of students**
- **Many students would benefit from more frequent tuition and more fulltime tutors could provide this service**

- **We have a lot of students coming into the scheme who require a group tutor (fulltime ones) to meet demand**
- **I think there is a particular quality in part time volunteer service which suits adult literacy on a one to one basis**
- **Students need to be able to begin classes straight away – often have to wait until a tutor becomes available. – would provide career structure/opportunities for tutors**
- **They would be better skilled at the job. Volunteers are difficult to find. With full time tutors you can create a warm and welcoming centre**
- **As we are just starting with adult literacy it has been wonderful to see such interest, but we still have so much to do to get the real needy people into the centre**
- **I think there are a lot more people who have literacy problems that need help**
- **I do not think there would be enough demand**
- **I feel the need is there for fulltime group tutor positions**
- **If permanent premises available this would be a good scheme and of assistance to voluntary tutors**
- **Have insufficient experience to make valid comment**
- **Many people would show preference to working within a group as opposed to 1:1 therefore the demand for group tutor positions is quite high**
- **At least 1 full time tutor per group would ensure permanent assistance available**
- **Our group leader is in a position to answer. Insufficient knowledge to answer.**
- **Group tuition is very beneficial to some students . tutors have a great deal of preparation work**
- **To cope with the increasing numbers that are coming forward**
- **I believe that increasing demand for ABE will make fulltime positions necessary**
- **One hour a week is not enough**
- **Some of the people we help, I think would benefit from the expertise of such people**
- **Put adult literacy on a more professional standing**
- **If there is a waiting list for subjects**
- **Sometimes 2 hours a week is not enough with some students**
- **More stability**
- **Better management**
- **2 hrs – 4 hrs a week only gets you started, the students need that every day to keep up the enthusiasm**
- **The need for adult literacy is so great part time volunteering is not enough**

Would you be interested in increasing the amount of tutoring that you do in your literacy scheme?

Give Reasons

- **Too busy! And too old!!**

- **Maybe by one hour so as I am working full-time and find it difficult to fit everything in. but One hour per week is not sufficient time to succeed with a student. I think.**
- **No. I do 2 hours tutoring every week**
- **Not at moment. Maybe when I retire**
- **To fulfil the students needs for tuition**
- **Would like it as a career**
- **Two hours per week is a long slow process and we could maybe help more people with more hours to pay tutors**
- **Being retired from work I have some spare time available**
- **To improve my skills. To gain experience of helping learners of different abilities – beginner, moving on etc**
- **Lack of time at present**
- **Tutoring is very fulfilling (sometimes)**
- **In full time employment**
- **I could possibly give 2 hrs per week, I feel this might benefit the student, by working 1 hr on 2 different days**
- **When my health improves, I would be willing to do more hours but not full-time**
- **To help my students come to grips with how much effort and work is needed to make significant progress**
- **At present I would not have any more time to give**
- **If I was getting paid for it I would be willing to increase my tutoring**
- **I feel that one hour per week is not enough time but due to lack of space in the premises that is all that is on offer at this time. I enjoy this work and would like to give more time to my student**
- **I am retired. I have some time to spare in spite of having many interests**
- **Too busy**
- **Because of my other work**
- **Sometime in future, after completing studies. Have specialised knowledge relating to dyslexia**
- **Currently, no as I am busy with a fulltime job and other commitments**
- **Can't physically do anymore!!**
- **Would want to get a little more experience first**
- **Fulltime work and other commitments**
- **I work fulltime so I couldn't give it more time**
- **Time constraints**
- **Other commitments**
- **Have not got the time**
- **Only with the same adult**
- **Not at the moment**
- **I am interested but not dedicated to a level the learner(s) deserve(s)**
- **I have enough to cope with in my own scheme and too much would water down the other work**
- **Later and as paid employment, when my youngest child is older.**
- **At present I don't have the spare time**
- **Not enough time**
- **I am a fulltime carer**
- **I would like to give more time in the future as I enjoy this work**
- **I enjoy working with people/ enjoy the work**
- **I am not in apposition to do so at the moment, due to lack of time**
- **At the moment I'm very busy with work and other interests**
- **If paid I would do up to 10/12 hrs per week for income**

- **The one hour per week which I do is not a lot but is definitely enough for my student per night**
- **Personally i'm not interested – training should be available for those who feel they need it**
- **While an extra session would be of benefit to the learner, I, as a volunteer feel that even one extra session per week would conflict with other weekly commitments**
- **Available time at the moment, find the work rewarding**
- **If I have free time in hands**
- **I am retiring as tutor**
- **I enjoy teaching/tutoring**
- **I really enjoy the work – I get lots of support and feel lots of satisfaction**
- **I enjoy the work**
- **Not at the moment. Other commitments**
- **Not at present – perhaps in the future**
- **One student at a time is as much as I can cope with presently**
- **I hold position as A.L. Organiser – so find that quite time consuming**
- **I find about 15 hours of this kind of work enough. There's a lot of preparation**
- **Too busy at work – often work late**
- **I would like to work another morning**
- **Not at present- shortage of time**
- **I have 3 young children 2 of whom are learning to read and write**
- **Not at the moment – for family reasons**
- **Not enough time available**
- **No time to be committed. I have other interests**
- **There seems to be plenty of need and right now I have the time**
- **Not at present. Too busy at work**
- **Students would retain more and make more sustained progress**
- **No time available**
- **We have 3 x 2 hours per week and we need the rest of the time for other activities**
- **I have the time, interest and ability and I could do with the money!**
- **Other commitments**
- **It is not appropriate for me to increase my hours at the present time**
- **But not at the present due to other commitments**
- **I already do quite a lot of tutoring**
- **Money, experience, enjoyment**
- **Interested in increasing tutoring hrs from 4 (presently). Would like to explore the possibility of diversification re subjects**
- **I have childcare commitments and am happy with my hours this year**
- **I do only one hour per week at the moment and I enjoy it**
- **Time considerations at present**
- **One or two hours a week not nearly enough**
- **Would like to gain experience with different age group- but consider two students would be enough for the average volunteer who has limited spare time**
- **I have a little more time available at the moment and it is a great boost to receive some payment for tutoring**
- **I was used to doing a lot of teaching, and one student per week is a bit chintzy, to my way of thinking**
- **Work and other commitments don't allow for it**
- **I enjoy teaching and recently have more time**

- **Time limitations**
- **At the moment I am fairly busy**
- **I would be interested in group work when I have finished my course**
- **I believe in this service**
- **I would like to help someone else**
- **Not at the moment other commitments**
- **Not available yet**
- **Not at the moment due to personal circumstances**
- **Possibly**
- **Only by a couple more hours – but even then I am not so sure, given a full-time job commitment. However I do really enjoy working in the scheme**
- **Gladly – always willing to help if needed**
- **As a retired old lady I do not wish to add any further pressures to an already busy life!!!**
- **Only if it was paid, I also work**
- **I have some spare hours that I am available**
- **I want to make a career. I enjoy and love my work.**
- **At present I give 2 hrs per week. I would give 3 hrs. Which could facilitate 2 students instead of 1**
- **Already have a fulltime teaching job and family**
- **At present I could give another night**
- **16 hours is about right for me now**
- **At the moment one of my students is taking a break due to family reasons so hopefully someone else will fill his slot**
- **I have enough hours**
- **Due to current work commitments – I cant**
- **I have always been interested in tutoring and I would like to do it full time**
- **Don't have time to dedicate**
- **Couldn't commit any more time at the moment**
- **Not at present**
- **No more time available to give at present, but in the future some will become available**
- **Lack of time due to other commitments**
- **Not enough time available**
- **To have continuation day to day. Some students can easily forget week to week or even after 2 week break**
- **Not enough time – the student remains for an hour and works on Microsoft Word or 'Star Spell' package.**

Appendix Four

Partial Interview Transcript

Thanks for doing the interview. 420 questionnaires were returned to me and we have decided that the best thing is to go back to participants – tutors who have participated within the survey and to adult literacy organisers to present the findings as well as trying to find out other information about changes that have taken place in adult literacy- basic ed. over the last few years. As a participant on the ground like yourself, a local manager, how have the changes impacted on your particular scheme??

One of the big changes is an increase in number, numbers of people coming forward, let's say 3 or 4 years we would have had 120 – 130 students, this year we had 300 enrolled.

And that's over the last say 3 years?

Yeah, well it happened fairly quickly. We had about the same number last year as well, so it happened fairly quickly. Another thing that has happened but it's only happened this year is that we have a huge number, a much greater number than usual of one-to-one students. We would normally have had 18 – 20 (about) one-to-one students; this year at the moment we have 42 one-to-ones in the centre. Now at first I was beginning to think, am I doing something different, am I not putting them into groups? And myself and (ALO) pulled out some of the forms, looked at them and

said no way, they need one-to-one. So we're actually beginning to think that with the increased publicity about literacy service and I think maybe even the television and the radio programmes and there's more discussion and more talk about it, and a greater awareness of it over the last few years, that we are actually reaching the people who need it most.

They're hard to reach - the ones that need it most?

That's what we think, we've kind of come to that conclusion you know that we are actually getting more of those people ... huge number of tutors, we're chock-a-block at the moment now and one of the difficulties then is about rooms and space and where you put them, but we managed so far to accommodate all of the ones and I have a few there now that have come in just before Easter and we have sorted out who we're going to give them to and where they're going to go, maybe added into groups that are already in place that they'd fit into, groups that haven't been established for too long, maybe and they can slot into them and .. 3 one to ones and put them together, so that is actually the biggest thing that has happened. Now it has other implications if you like for training. One of the things that has come with increased funding and increased interest by the Department of Education since the OECD report that there is a huge literacy difficulty in Ireland, they are now asking for, they are putting more money into it, but then we have to, if you like, give them back figures and ...

That actually came up in even the sheet I sent to ALO's to see would they be interested in participating and when the actual questionnaires were sent out and the revised ones sent back a few months later, some schemes had so many differences in changes and they weren't too sure the way numbers were and they had said that even with the Department figures and the way it works and even some schemes who said they'd participate didn't in the end because of the fact that they have so much paper work from the Department in comparison to before, probably schemes which wouldn't have full-time organisers. But it does seem that literacy organisers weren't too sure about like how many tutors were on the scheme, how many students, and the department seem to want firmer figure than probably you can get in a literacy setting.

Well the think is you can only give them the figures that are valid on the day that you are filling in the forms because it is moveable, you know students come and go, tutors come and go and it isn't ... you probably wouldn't get the same figures two months in a row but the tutors.. The Dept. want numbers, figures and it was one of the issues I would have about the feedback that we can give to them, it is strictly quantitative, there is nothing about the quality, apart from we do tell them what courses we run, we put on one-to-one, we have smaller groups, we have NCVA, we have Junior Cert and Leaving Cert in different subjects.

But they are just interested in working out the figures ...

They would get that information, but really and truly most of the information they look for is all about figures or numbers working, how many people on the scheme, how many people are doing this, how many people are doing that, but another thing that it doesn't take into account and we have actually raised this, we send our figures back to the VEC, we don't send them back directly to the Department of Education, they collate them, I think, from the different schemes and send them into the department, but we always include numbers of students and numbers of places because that takes into account a student who comes to the scheme three times or two times a week, that is not reflected in the figures that the Department wants.

They only wanted one person, name and so on...

You can say you have 300 students but you might actually have 400 places, which makes a big difference to the numbers of people that you are catering for each week. That's one of the issues and another one then is around training, the Department now who didn't recognise adult literacy organisers until almost 3 or 4 years ago, about November four years ago, that they actually acknowledged and recognised adult literacy organisers and gave us a contract, an annual contract. Up until then we had been paid by the hour at part-time teaching hours but we had to adjust our hours and claim them, it was very messy. But since then, of course, they are looking for more accountability, but one of the things they've also looked for is training for the adult literacy organisers, so to get a job now as an adult literacy organiser and I'm not sure if it's just in Co. Dublin or ...you must have the NALA/WIT certificate in adult training – maybe in management certificate or equivalent and but they give you a

few years to get that. Now I think that's good, you know that is addressing the quality of the service and I think that's very good and then what's happening as well, there's an awful lot of courses being offered for tutors as well, so I suppose I asked tutors now to do these courses and to get involved and they can't do them on a modular basis they can do one at a time, two of our tutors have done the first full certificate case, and others are just doing it on a modular basis. They are all changes that have happened in the last few years. Can't think of anything else.

Those issues are all coming up in the other schemes I've been to. They are obviously countrywide changes. Looking even at the profile of the tutors that you have, what was noticed throughout the country ...

Can I just say one other thing that occurs to me, another change that happened is that tutors are stay in with us longer because we can pay them, 3 or 4 years ago when we moved into this premises here, we had I'd say we had about 8 tutors who were paid, probably for only two hours a week and maybe one or two paid for four hours a week, but since the money became available and was poured into the adult literacy schemes, we can now pay more tutors, so any tutor who has a group is paid where before most of our groups ...

And that has kept tutors involved.

Yes, women who were looking for part-time work, don't want a job but want to be out there, want to be involved and want to earn some money, they're staying with us,

so we're actually ... even though our numbers have increased hugely, we still only do one training course in the year and like years ago when I started first we used train 20 – 22 people at a time, now we keep it to 16, we only train 16 tutors, once a year, and because people are staying longer, it's enough. We don't have the same turnover that we had before, people leaving, a lot of the tutors have stayed longer and are getting paid maybe for 8 – 10 hours a week.

Because that actually links in with the first thing I was about to ask you, when we looked around the country at the different schemes, now there was a big rural-urban divide and a lot of your scheme, out of all of them is the scheme with the most paid tutors in it, but there was the big thing that nearly 50% of tutors throughout the whole scheme were on their scheme less than two years, with OK when we looked at it was about a 20% that had been on it over eight years so there were a fair amount of people relatively inexperienced and a lot of people who had stuck it out at the end and you think money, the part-time paid aspect is one motivation that keeps tutors involved.

I think so yes, and they feel that they are valued and if a tutor then gains some experience and she is being paid for her work and then she's offered another group she'll take it, she's offered another group, she'll take it, she's building up her experience, she's becoming of more use to this scheme, if you like, she's good and she stays but then because she's involved and she enjoys it and she is getting a feedback from it herself and it's worth her while to stay.

And actually interested in that 'she' and we noticed that the vast majority of tutors are female, is that primarily the part-time nature of it?

Well a lot of our volunteer's tutors would be women and men would be people who are working full-time during the day and they're only available at night, but it seems over the years that it's an area that just attracts women more than men. Now I don't know why this is people have often said to us we should try and recruit more men but recruiting is done on a broad basis we don't look for women, our ads go into the school brochures, advertising night classes that's where most of our tutors come from, some come from word of mouth, you know they might have seen a notice or something like that, but we don't target women, but women seem to be more attracted to this area and I often think, let's ... I don't know why it attracts more women than men because the men we have are really good and enjoy it and stay with us very often for years. But we had one man who left because there so few men involved, but mostly it's women. But I think men are involved in other voluntary work and it's just an area that attracts more women than men. St. Vincent de Paul, there are different things that more men are involved in than women.

This is interesting.

Again, your scheme is quite different from the fact the way tuition is involved, and it is interesting the way you said earlier that there is a much bigger increase in the amount of one-to-one tuition, but it seems that most schemes throughout the country, like three-quarters of all tuition is one-to-one. You were talking

already about the fact that there is that big increase and the fact that resources used up by it, but do you see that the whole progression thing between one-to-one and group is it necessary that someone comes in on a one-to-one situation would need to progress to a group or...

I think if people if they come with very basic skills and they need one-to-one they will be given a tutor on a one-to-one basis but if they are ready to work with other people, it might be just two to one or three to one, a small group, I think they benefit from working with other people, learning from other people, the interaction is in the group and also the realisation that you know maybe they are good or better at something than somebody else, but what I very often do is let's say have a tutor working on a one-to-one with a man, I might make that into a group rather than lose a student, so they are not being moved too far, they are just having extra people come in and work with the same tutor. Now that works sometimes and I'd say probably more often than not students move on from the group. Let's say if they finish up June they come back in September they come into a group, now you're probably talking the next step is probably a small group.

So would there be a timescale generally in this scheme for one-to-one? Would somebody last on one-to-one for just a year or could it be longer?

People have been in one-to-one yes for longer than a year? It very much depends on their skills and I suppose in a way it probably depends on the time of year they come in. If they come in September they'll probably stay on the one-to-one for the year

unless they turn out that their skills are really good and they can move on into a group sooner or we develop the one-to-one situation into a group but if they come in April or May and they really need one-to-one, chances are they will be still on one-to-one from September on. I mean I had a student come in this week who can write three letters of the alphabet, now that is very, very weak and you don't get many students whose skills are that weak but he's going to be on one-to-one for a good while.

Now just links into one-to-one tutors generally are voluntary tutors.

Yes, all the one-to-one tutors are voluntary.

So therefore the voluntary tutor is actually starting off with somebody like that example for a person who comes in and knows three letters of the alphabet. Would in general the one-to-one might be somebody who had just come off a training course or maybe mightn't have that much experience on a scheme. Is it a big jump for them into a one-to-one, would they have another assistance within it.

Coming from where?

If the tutor is coming in teaching a one-to-one, generally they are probably ... would the more experienced tutors be group tutors.

Yes, generally people go from one to one tuition as they get more experience, then they might take on 2 or 3 students and the following year maybe they're going to have a group of 4 or 5 because the tutors are progressing as well. But at the same time you sometimes get tutors who are very skilful, might have teaching experience, might have worked with groups before, and are very quickly asked to work with groups, maybe because we need a tutor. I mean I have already got one tutor off the last training course working with a group. She did one to one for a while and then we had other students coming in who just fitted in with the students she had so well I hadn't another tutor to set up another group and I asked her to take them and she's taking them and she's working really well with them and she's extremely interested in developing this as a career and is already talking about going to Maynooth to do an adult education programme next year, but she has teaching experience but with children, but at the same time she has some experience in the field.

And the Department will make no allowances for one to one, somebody who is probably very skilled within one to one ...

One to one tutors are not paid, now the only thing is ... I will tell you that we do this, sometimes if a tutor takes three one to ones we'll call it a group or pair, but she'll take them separately.

Oh so she'll do three hours work and get paid for one ...

She'll only get paid for two hours. Depends on the student, might only get an hour each, and she'll get paid for two hours or there might be one and get an 1½ it depends.

But strictly speaking one to one wouldn't be provided by the Department funds.

But we have to call that a group in order to pay her. But she's actually giving an awful lot of extra time. But that's not official

But when 80% of tutors are teaching one to one, it tallies in why possibly 80% of tutors are voluntary in most schemes then that they are ...

Now I got that from (other literacy scheme), they did that and I thought that's a brilliant idea. Now when we have whatever 40 odd one to one and we haven't got 40 odd tutors for one to one.

OK the training generally seems throughout the country it's about 8 – 10 weeks of training.

What we're doing at the moment and this is the second year we've done it twice now that the tutors who come on to the initial tutor training course agree to do the NALA/WIT Literacy module, it's one module of the certificate course and people are given that information before they start and that's what they agree to take on, so what they do is 20 hours of initial tutor training course plus 10 hours in-service

training plus experience. They have to have, I can't remember the exact number of hours now, is it 24 hours something like that. Then they compile a portfolio together, which is submitted to Waterford, and then they get a certificate to say that they have got their initial training.

Potential tutors, what motivations would you think tutors would have on this scheme for getting involved?

In this scheme it's an awareness that people have literacy difficulties, that they don't and that they can help people but we have been very lucky here in (name of area), we have to do very little recruiting, we put the ads in the Community School brochures, we put up notices here and there, but then we have links with home-school liaison teachers with the LES with different groups. And let's say we have a fairly high profile in the area you know with community groups and things like that, because we have been here since (year) and a lot of the groups wouldn't be here as long as that so we have been here all the time they've been in place, but I think something that could be well worth doing would be literacy awareness programmes so that if you go out let's say and meet a group of FAS workers or a group of people who work in the LES or CE supervisors, people like that are already involved they might know people but sometimes people are just not aware of the literacy problem or what's needed or the fact that you'll be given training, that you don't have to be able to do it from scratch.

Because what we found the same thing, it was altruistic; most people were coming because they wanted to help somebody who didn't have the skills themselves. Fifty-something per cent were interested in extending their teaching skills, it mightn't be for professional reasons but they just wanted to be able to ... it might be even to help their children, they thought by helping somebody to read or write that it would be useful for their children, but the one thing, a very small amount of tutors, only in suburban schemes where the tutors themselves had had previously had literacy problems and from a scheme that's over 20 years old, would you have had any experience of any former student ever coming back.

We had a couple yes over the years, but it wasn't ... let's say although their skills had improved, their skills still wouldn't have been as good as the usual tutor so what I used them for was as helpers in groups and that was useful but they did it for a while and then they moved on to do their own things, you know.

I'm just wondering does that reflect on the service? It's probably the only system in education then that somebody ... successful participants, people who have gone through the programmes ... and I'm not talking about this particular circumstances, I'm talking probably of all the resource things, the lack of resources that have gone through it.

Yes, I don't know, I've never actually ... as I say this has only happened a few times that people felt they'd like to give something back to the scheme because they've got so much out of it themselves, but it has only happened over a number of years.

Yes it's a tiny small percentage.

Two people in my experience. But one of the things which the tutors often say to, the reasons they give, because we always ask them why they want to do it, is because they have been successful themselves that because they have done well themselves, they feel they'd like to give something back and do something, help other people who weren't as lucky or as privileged as they were, things like that.

It was just seen as well when we were asking tutors about what they did, or other things they help their students with other than actual reading or write, or what other basic education they were learning, was that they have to fill out forms, have them for driving test, have them for interviews, there seems to be real holistic approach in adult education and it doesn't seem to be reflected by the Department of Education's constant harping on about the economic benefits of literacy, I mean a lot of things that tutors felt that their students gained was not necessarily the fact that they got a better job and actually better jobs it was that they increased their self confidence, they were helping them getting involved in their children's education, that they were getting involved in community activity. It just seems that there's a big holistic improvement, the

big holistic approach is to big benefits other than economic and there seems to be everything ...

Well I think the focus in literacy schemes would not be the same as the focus of the Department of Education's although if you look at the White Paper they do say, you know that it will improve, more people will be available for work and all that kind of stuff, they also actually say that it is for self development, so would you see yourself then that a lot of the students here that the main benefit they would have would be personal. I think that our main approach is student centred, we aim to give people what they want to help them to be able to do what they want to be able to do, but I feel students come in because they want to be able to fill out forms or they want to be able to write a letter themselves, or they want to be able to write a note to the teacher, whatever the particular things they ask about when they come in. As they progress and their aims change, and they realise that there is other stuff out there that they can do, and they move on and they do other things, their horizons are broadened ... a better horizon ... and as they are learning and they're realising what they can do, they actually do more and learn more, and I mean over the years we have introduced the Junior Cert and now we have the Leaving Cert but something that has come recently for me is for people who don't want accredited courses, putting on other classes or courses for people who can follow who are not interested in getting a piece of paper, so I mean we can offer, we already have got spelling classes, creative writing class, personal development classes and I only have this in my head at the moment, it hasn't gone beyond that, but I am looking at maybe putting on classes

like Literature, just looking at Literature, just for the sake of it and for the enjoyment of it and for the learning ...

Rather than just getting some certificate at the end of the course ...

Absolutely, because not everybody wants it, but at the moment that's the kind of progression route that's there. It's the accredited course if you like.

You're trying keep with the student centred part of the scheme as well

Yes, by offering more courses that are not accredited.

Just about that whole thing you were talking about the tutor training, most tutors are very much in agreement with their being an accredited course for tutors to do, most tutors would not do it, from what the results of the survey. 90% said it was great there should be a course available, a lot said it should be more flexible than it is at the moment, there should be distant learning, or more evenings, rather than the way now, but only 30% said well I'd actually do it.

The initial tutor-training course?

No the NALA/WIT or some actual accredited training rather than follow on.

It is more flexible in that you can do it on a modular basis, you can done one module a year or two modules a year or three, do you know what I mean, so you can build it up gradually.

But you see tutors on the scheme that a lot would be prepared to go and do the full ...

No, it's very time consuming and very hard work.

That was just the same as a lot of people had seen that unless they really wanted to get into progression with it in that they wouldn't ...

There are, there's no such thing as a job in Adult Literacy work yet for tutors, but it's coming, it will happen.

Do you think that will chance the service totally?

I think it's people that have the qualifications, that have the piece of paper they are the ones who will get the jobs.

There was a concern about if there were more full-time group tutors or full time positions within the schemes, that it would change the holistic approach. It would change the whole student-centeredness of the scheme and it would make it more like school which is ...?

Well, I don't think ... if the student-centred approach is maintained and I think perhaps that has to come from the top, from whoever is managing the scheme, I think they have to maintain that and ensure that happens, I mean even if a tutor is working full-time, it doesn't mean that the students are going to be full time, they are still only going to come in for two hours a week, six hours a week, and you'd get very few unless they are on the VTOS programme or a return to education programme coming for any longer than that, so it's not like they are coming into class and they are going to be there every day and another thing that came up when I was doing some work there a while ago, was about the size of groups and it was suggested that a group of six or seven is ideal and I don't think there is any way that a group of six or seven adults together will be the same as a class of 20 or 25 in the school.

A different type of situation?

Absolutely yes, and the relationship of tutors and students is different, should be different and a student-centred approach should be maintained.

Would you think that professionalisation of the sector would be good, having more permanent career structure for tutors?

Yes, I think it would, I think it would develop the service; I think it would help the quality of the service.

But there'll always be a need for the voluntary tutor.

There's absolutely no way the Department of Education is going to pay for one to one tutors and that's what you need the volunteers for and that's no going to happen.

Good now, I'm just even looking here at the age findings, it seems that there was nobody under 20 who was a tutor, and that's probably because a lot are just out of school. While in England there seems to be a small amount of younger people. Certainly in England where 21 – 30 age group isn't widely represented, there a small amount 8% - that would indicate with here as well. The vast majority seemed – in the other groups there was about 20% in each, so if you were talking 31 – 40; 41 – 50; 51-60, seemed to be in the three age groups that there were 20% and that would tally pretty much with this scheme as well. Just wanted to double-check that. And would you think that in trying to encourage younger tutors then would be useful or would ... just that people would sort of think that maybe it's better ... I'm just throwing it out that somebody in his 20s might be better teaching somebody in his 20s or a client or adult learning might be more comfortable coming in if there's somebody around their own age group.

Well if I think if people are coming in let's say the youngest people we'd have here would be between 16 and 20, which would be the youngest grouping we'd have. I mean if they have somebody whose 25 or 30, I think that would work fine. I can't see me going and targeting young people to become tutor, they have so much other

stuff going on in their lives that they'd probably aren't as settled or as accommodating as somebody whose kind of older.

Not it's just that because it was the main group, which there was a gap out of ...

And I've said before I don't target any particular group, I just put out the ads ... we'll we don't take everybody comes; we actually have a selection process.

And what would the selection process be like?

An interview. We give people a form to fill out first, we give them all the information about what's expected of them on the course, what the course entails and then what they'll be expected to do afterwards. For example, we point out that it's not just two hours tuition, there's also preparation time, in-service training and meetings that they are expected to come to. So sometimes when all of that is laid out for people they decide that they haven't enough time to do it or if there's more involved than they thought, they weren't prepared to give that much time to it, but I think by just laying it all down there that in itself selects or deselects some people but at the interview stage then, I mean some ... I mean you're just going on your experience, how somebody relates to you, how they chat to you, how they talk to you, how they come across to you, do you think they would make a good tutor? And it's just a very personal thing and I often think sometimes maybe I keep some people who are maybe were not as good as some that I let go, but I've absolutely no way of judging. I have to just go on my own ...

OK, the next thing I have to quickly check is frustrations for tutors. I just want to see would these be things you probably would have heard from tutors on the scheme, that one of the biggest things was students not turning up; they felt that teaching learning blockage not getting through to students as they felt frustrated. There were question marks as well about premises and resources.

We're fine here with premises at the moment. I mean sometimes we have one room that people don't like because it's in between two other rooms and some people don't mind it, a few people have complained about it, but it's a nice room that's it. But resources we have no problem, we give every tutor a pack with a few books in it and they can change the books and there are still resources out there that they can dip into.

So they wouldn't be a big a problem on this scheme as they would be on others.

I don't think it's a problem at all. Now the one thing that tutors have asked for sometimes is for more material for very weak students. Now I think that they have to develop more of their own materials, but we actually have bought some stuff recently that for beginners, we have actually bought more and we started building up a library for tutors, reading not worksheets, not photocopies of stuff, but just for their own information about adult education and what I'm doing is I'm checking out with all the tutors who have done ... I have a list here ... all the tutors who have done courses with NALA/WIT or another course, I am asking them to recommend books and we'll

buy the books and we'll have them there in the library and tutors can access that, just to increase their own knowledge and if they're interested in a particular topic, let's say like group work, something that there will actually be books, well there are some books available, but they haven't been let's say accessible and sometimes they go out and they don't come back but we have a new system set up ... they'll be on view out in the press out there but they have to come for a key to get them.

And the final thing, I was talking about training earlier and I forgot about in-service training. It's provided I heard you say this on the scheme, would many of the tutors attend it, is it compulsory?

Well it is compulsory in that the tutors who are now doing the initial tutor training course have to have ten hours in-service in order to complete their training. Now I can't make people come to in-service but if ... the ones that are in the evening sometimes are not that well attended, but the ones that have put in the day time a full day on Saturday, choice of two workshops in the morning, choice of two workshops in the afternoon they were very well attended, we were very happy, we had about 30 people out of 40-ish.

Which is pretty good, the 75% was probably right.

I think actually we have 48 tutors at the moment.

And would all of them be active?

Over 30.

But you see on some schemes the tutors are on the list but they are not actually active at the moment, so would all those 48 be active?

There's only one not working at the moment just because she's not available.

But anybody who's available to take them.

Everybody else is working.

From even talking to other tutors in VEC or other ALOs would that be the situation you would have heard basically, any available tutor is taken and used.

I think so yes, I mean something that we don't do here and that I have let's say on my list to introduce is offering somebody in a group a one-to-one tutor, now I couldn't do that moment because I don't have the tutors to do it, but it's something that we are going to look at in the future. If you have a group doing let's say NCVA or Junior Cert. but they are still very worried about their spelling, still want to some simple work or they just need extra help about let's say getting stuff down on paper, they would be able to offer them one to one tuition as well as their group but we'd need more tutors, more space, more room for all of that. But it's another ... it's an

idea that I've picked up from talking to other people that we could offer. Now we've done it an odd time, but it's not something that we regularly offer or is not available, because of space and the availability of students and things like that, but it's an idea.