



Literacy in the Workplace – Perspectives from England

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Three Areas for Focus

- **The effects of poor basic skills on working life in Britain.**
- **The importance and usefulness of the workplace as a site for training.**
- **NIACE's work on policy and practice on basic skills in the workplace.**

Poor Basic Skills and Working Life

- **Those with poor literacy have lowest levels of full time employment.**
- **They are twice as likely to be unemployed (2005 figures).**
- **They tend to have less access to training, are in low skilled, less stable and poorly paid work and poor promotional prospects.**
- **Numeracy has particularly strong effects for women.**
- **The inter-generational effects of poor literacy are clear.**

Financial Impact of Poor Basic Skills

“We find literacy and numeracy effects on earnings that are over and above any general effect on earnings from a person being more cognitively able. These results imply that continued efforts to improve the skills of the UK workforce are needed, and that investment in initiatives that genuinely do improve individuals’ basic skills are likely to yield relatively high wage (and potentially employment) returns.”

The Value of Basic Skills in the British Labour Market
Anna Vignoles *et al* from 2008

- **Most adults with poor literacy are either in work, or are actively seeking work.**
- **Embedded basic skills i.e. where literacy is taught as part of something else – is a very successful way of both engaging adults and of improving their skills.**
- **Learning in the workplace works.**

Making the Business Case

- **Increase productivity, profit and efficiency.**
- **Well being and health.**
- **Finance and Pensions.**
- **Families and Communities.**



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Army Basic Skills Provision



National Standards: Local Provision

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LESSONS LEARNT THE CHALLENGES

Ownership

Targets
&
Drivers

Measurement

Selling the
Message

Getting
the
Right Fit

CASE STUDY - The British Army

- **6 years into the development of a whole organisational approach.**
- **Assessment for all new recruits, including speaking and listening, and for promotion.**
- **Specialist tutors.**
- **E learning opportunities.**
- **Embedding LLN in the curriculum.**

CASE STUDY – Police Basic Skills pilot July 2009

- **One year into the development of a whole organisational approach.**
- **Piloting initial assessment in police context.**
- **Awareness raising for trainers.**
- **Fast Facts book.**
- **Benefits of LLN development for both individuals and line managers.**
- **Mapping skills framework against national standards.**

Police Force – Key Findings after 1 year

- **PCSO initial assessment sample showed 53% below functional literacy.**
- **Clear impact of literacy difficulties on ability to perform required role and maintain service standards.**
- **Recruitment of new staff: need to assess literacy skills at pre-recruitment stage.**
- **Potential for further development and tailoring of Fast Facts resource.**

- **The valuable role of a senior champion and other key people, including ULRs, within the organisation.**
- **Review and development of effective systems for processing and communicating employee additional needs to training staff and line managers.**
- **Basic Skills Awareness Training is rolled out for all HR, Occupational Health and Training Services staff.**
- **Development of current systems to ensure that Skills for Life results are captured and that skills development support is planned and monitored alongside wider professional development.**