



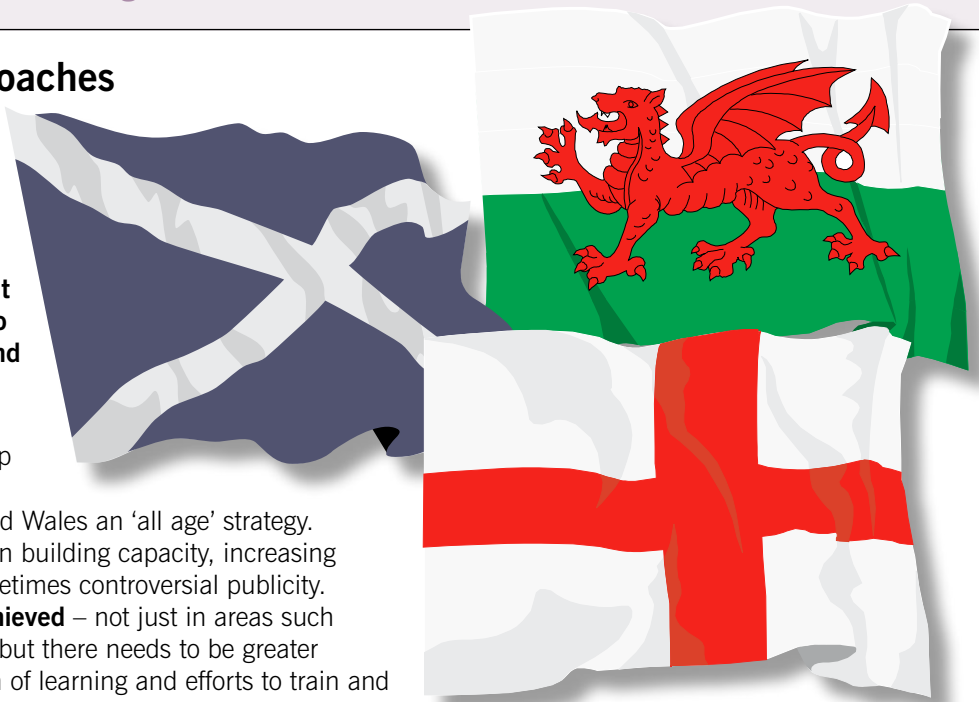
LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY

York consulting has been interested and actively working in the literacy, numeracy and language (LLN) field since the mid 1990s. The sector has received unprecedented attention over the last 5 years and YCL has established itself as a lead organisation in research and evaluation of LLN policy, programmes and national strategies.

Three Nations, Three Approaches

It is universally agreed that levels of literacy, numeracy and language have a major impact on the opportunities of individuals, in addition to the health of a national economy. Over the past years, it has been interesting to follow the **different national strategy and policy responses to improving LLN skills in England, Scotland and Wales.**

The strategies are fundamentally different – England has a target driven, target group focussed strategy; Scotland, a contrasting learner centred ‘social practice’ model, and Wales an ‘all age’ strategy. However, each country has had success in building capacity, increasing literacy and reducing stigma through sometimes controversial publicity. Of course, **there remains much to be achieved** – not just in areas such as numeracy and employer engagement, but there needs to be greater understanding of learners, personalisation of learning and efforts to train and retain skilled teachers and trainers. See our website for the YCL Evaluation of the Welsh Basic Skills Strategy (2004), Refresh of the ALNIS (due Autumn 2006) and Cross Government Project Evaluation reports (DfES, 2004-6).



Family Literacy

Family literacy, although an established process for learning, has received new focus across the UK. In Scotland, the provision, mode of delivery and rationale for developing programmes differs across every local authority area. To better understand the breadth and scope of family literacies learning, **YCL was commissioned by Learning Connections, Communities Scotland** to map provision across the country; the research will be completed by summer 2006.



Skilled for Health

The LLN agenda cuts across government departments and achieving a 'joined up' agenda is challenging at a national and local level. The Skilled for Health initiative – a joint DfES and DoH initiative - aimed to break new ground in bringing together health and education professionals to develop health education/activity with embedded LLN learning. Some projects were extremely successful, for example the Community Mothers programme in Harlow, who trained their community mothers to support young mums with the LLN that is relevant to them in managing their own and their child's health. **The YCL evaluation of Skilled for Health highlighted the success factors and barriers facing the initiative.**

Workplace Literacy and Numeracy

YCL has worked extensively with employers, training providers and learners to try and identify issues and barriers that prevent employers and employees gain literacy and numeracy skills. **There remain tensions between employer and employee priorities**, but the success of the Employer Training Pilots, and the national roll out of Train to Gain has raised the profile and opportunity to tackle some of the financial barriers to learning for small employers. Whilst it is often difficult to measure increases in productivity from LLN learning, indicative evidence strongly supports this hypothesis.



Maths4Life

As a response to the need to renew efforts in the Numeracy field, the Skilled for Life Strategy Unit (DfES) launched Maths4Life - a three year project which aims to stimulate a positive approach to teaching and learning in mathematics and numeracy in England, focusing on adults from Entry Level to Level 2. The project is being developed by the Maths4Life consortium of partners, led by the National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC). **YCL is working with the NRDC to conduct research to support the Maths4Life project** – we look forward to being part of this much needed initiative.



Our Clients:

- DfES
- Scottish Executive
- Welsh Assembly
- Basic Skills Agency
- NRDC
- Learning Connections
- TUC
- Workplace Basic Skills Network

Key YCL Contact

Kerry Merrill leads on LLN work at YCL, and has been involved in the field with YCL for over 6 years.



Kerry Merrill

The core team includes **Helen Thomas** and **Alison Hunter**, both of whom have lead on major LLN projects while working at YCL.

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