

## Free online learning Platform - WriteOn, Ireland

### Introduction:

Lack of literacy skills, or limited literacy skills (such as those up to primary school) in adults can restrain them from effectively participating in their working life. However, returning to learning can be difficult for adults due to reasons such as associated embarrassment and limited time.

Therefore, WriteOn (<http://www.writeon.ie>) was launched by NALA to provide free online learning across Ireland, to facilitate literacy development and accreditation for adult learners at Levels 2 and 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications of Ireland. It was implemented by National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), Ireland, in 2008.

### Intervention:

WriteOn provides two primary services to enable learners to achieve Levels 2 and 3 accreditations. A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tool that uses online assessments allows learners to obtain qualifications for what they have previously learnt but never received formal accreditation for; this innovative facility is the only method of RPL available in Ireland.

Those who do not qualify for certification through RPL, WriteOn offers a comprehensive suite of online learning materials, complemented by one-on-one tutor availability, for users to improve their skills and work towards accredited qualifications.

The programme is specifically designed for working individuals who through online learning materials can learn in their own time. Potential candidates need to create an online learner account, and then proceed to the Skills Checker service which determines the learner profile and presents the learner with a range of options for the awards that they may work towards. This then presents a visual graph of a learner's 'spiky profile' with recommendations for study.

The WriteOn programme also lends itself to blended learning approaches in physical 'bricks -and-mortar' learning institutes. Learners have access to one-on-one tutor sessions via telephone. The WriteOn tutors are qualified and experienced adult literacy instructors. These tutors are hired on a part time basis.

Learners can return to the Skills Checker at any time and change their answers if they feel their skills have changed. In this way, learners can see a visual picture of skills and competence improvement.

WriteOn learners have the option to obtain or work towards accredited level 2 and 3 qualifications through the national governing body Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

### Impact/ Learnings:

It has been noted that over 32,000 learners have created accounts with WriteOn, with over 2,500 learners going on to obtain 14,500 national certificates at levels 2 and 3. Also, more than 180 learning centres across the country, and 31 out of 33 national vocational education committees use the WriteOn programme for their blended teaching methods and accreditation. Therefore, WriteOn has reached nationwide recognition and many users have adopted it either as a stand-alone educational tool or use it to compliment any other existing programmes and courses.

The Online learning and assessment methodology maybe adapted in the Indian context, and the RPL component of PMKVY may be suitable modified to a blended training model, wherein candidates can assess their skills online at the PMKVY portal, access study materials and if required can approach brick and mortar training institutes to further upskill in a course of their choice. This model can take care of certifying existing skills in the workforce as well as provide a training pathway for pursuing higher skills according to labour market requirements.

*Source: Write On, Ireland (2014) UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.*