

# Literacies Learning on the Web

A Research Report

by

Jean Alcock

JARCS

(Jean Alcock Research & Consultancy Services)

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## Part 1: Introduction

The Literacies Learning on the Web project has two main objectives. Firstly, it aims to identify online interactive resources for tutors to use with adult literacy & numeracy learners. For many adult learners using computers is a very positive way of gaining and maintaining interest. It can introduce an element of fun and excitement into learning that would be difficult to emulate in other ways. It can be an excellent way of re-enforcing particular points of learning first taught by more traditional methods. It can open up possibilities for learning that are unable by other methods.

Although some suitable adult-oriented software has been available for several years, the Internet has greatly increased the potential for making such material available to practitioners and learners. It introduces a greater element of interactivity than is possible with computer software. In addition much of the material is free or at nominal charge. The main problem with this proliferation of material, however, is the lack of control on its quality. This research seeks to address this by identifying and assessing materials for suitability. The criteria used to make such assessments are discussed in the body of the report.

The second aim of the project is to produce an outline of a training course for adult literacy and numeracy practitioners. This course will aim to encourage and enable them to use the Internet as a teaching tool. Many people lack the confidence or knowledge to effectively harness this exciting resource. The objectives of the course will be

- To motivate practitioners to use non-traditional methods
- To identify benefits to learners of learning online and of using computer software
- To identify benefits to practitioners of teaching online and of using computer software
- To encourage the innovative use of materials to suit different needs.

It is anticipated that providing practitioners with a tailored training course and easy access to the resources will help promote the use of this new and exciting vehicle for learning.

## Part 2: Internet Search

The methodology outlined below was used to fulfil the first aim of the project, namely to make a search of the Internet for suitable interactive online learning resources. The object of the Internet research was to identify a variety of good resources which could be used in different ways by practitioners. It was not to identify every possible resource - that is a task that could stretch into infinity.

Throughout the research the emphasis has been on materials that can be used online with the learner entering answers or text directly into the computer and receiving immediate feedback. Some non-interactive websites that enable users to download workbooks and work sheets to use in more traditional ways are included but these have not been evaluated as part of this research (See Part 3 Section 7 on Page. 22)

The Internet search was carried out in three distinct stages:

### 1. Initial Search

A variety of search terms (See Table 1) were used to explore the Internet via the Google search engine.

Researching on the Internet can be a time-consuming and hit and miss affair. This is particularly true when using search terms such as "literacy" "numeracy" and "basic" as these terms are assigned to sites dealing with a wide variety of aspects of the topics and are used with different meanings. There is no standard thesaurus for searching the Internet and therefore the assigning of search terms to a Website is purely arbitrary. As an illustration, a search on the search engine "Google" using the term "literacy" brought up over 4 million Websites related to among other things:

- Educational Establishments
- Academic Research
- Policy Documents
- Training Materials for Practitioners
- Hardcopy Resources
- Lessons Plans for Practitioners
- Interactive Resources for learners

This variety of different aspects did not noticeably decrease with more refined searches even using terms such as "interactive" and "online".

Terms such as "Adult Learners" and "Basic Skills" can refer to learning at all levels while "literacy" & "numeracy" can refer to all ages with the search term "adult" meaning "parent" or "teacher".

Despite these difficulties most searches resulted in some material worth further exploration. It was sometimes necessary, however, to delve into the depths of a site resulting in some very long and unwieldy URLs. The first stage of the Internet search was brought to a close when searching under groups of different search terms started to lead to the same interactive on-line learning resources. Approximately 86 URLs thought to be of potential use were stored for future investigation.

<b>Search terms</b>	<b>Hits</b>
united kingdom literacy numeracy	12,900
united kingdom resources adult learners	12,900
United Kingdom online interactive adult literacy	4,610
United Kingdom online interactive adult numeracy	880
interactive, hangman, adults	8,000
united kingdom online interactive hangman adults	165
interactive counting money adult basic skills	5,800
united kingdom online interactive counting money adult basic skills	453
united kingdom online interactive word games adult literacy	1,420
united kingdom online interactive essential skills literacy	4,550
homonyms interactive online adult literacy	320
united kingdom homonyms adult literacy	42
united kingdom interactive online homonyms adult literacy	17
<p>Notes:</p> <p>Refining the search by specifying United Kingdom does not result in UK only sites but does help to greatly reduce the number of hits.</p> <p>Refining the search to obtain a searchable number of hits as in the last two examples did not result in any useful sites.</p>	

**Table 1: Search Terms and Hits**

## 2. Assessment and Classification

The 86 Websites identified in the initial research were further investigated to assess whether they would be useful in whole or in part. This process reduced the number to 34. The criteria used for rejection are given in Table 2.

Wrong level	The term "basic" is often applied to material that requires an existing high level of reading ability and a target towards high achievement. Many basic skills sites are aimed at students entering Higher Education who wish to brush up their English or Mathematics Skills, i.e. their basic skills. Similarly many sites offering online ICT training are aimed at people in the workplace who need to quickly acquire an ICT knowledge base.
Wrong age group	Sites billed as for all ages tend to be geared more towards children.
Instructions to difficult to understand	A good interactive site requires clear and easily understood instructions, attractively displayed. Frequently sites have a very long explanation that require a high level of reading skill or appear to have no instructions at all.
Unattractive appearance	Some sites are very busy with poor contrast and very small print. American sites, in particular use a very small point size in Times New Roman font. This really detracts from the interest and enjoyment in using them. However, some sites with this fault were retained if the content was very good.
Inappropriate language	This could be for many reasons: American terminology and/or spelling. Word games recognising American but not British informal language/slang Word games recognising words not in a standard dictionary Complex and obscure language
Inflexible interactivity	A good interactive site should offer options as to speed, sound and levels of difficulty. Sites that don't do this tend to give too little time to complete the tasks, especially for new users. Where there are different levels it can help to increase confidence in the learner as they move onto more difficult levels.
Technical Problems	In addition to design faults and unsuitability there is always the hazard in using the Internet of encountering technical problems, for example failed links or programmes that take too long to load up. Sites with consistent technical faults were rejected.

**Table 2 Reasons for Rejecting Websites**

### 3. Final Selection

A more in depth assessment was made of the remaining 34 sites and some changes were made to the final list. They were then classified into the following broad groups:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Using Computers and the Internet
- Personal Development
- Assessment Tools
- Just for Fun
- Make Your Own Materials

The full assessment of these sites is given in Part 2 of this report.

Many of the retained sites have some of the negative aspects outlined in Table 2 but these are outweighed by their positive aspects. These negative aspects are noted in the detailed assessment. A few sites are excellent with very few if any negative aspects.

Some of the sites cover one very specific learning activity such as Counting Change or expanding common elisions such as "They'll" and "I'm" while others give access to a huge array of different activities cover a wide range of themes or topics. It is often necessary to choose specific activities within some of these sites as not all will be appropriate. This is particularly true of English as a Second Language (ESL) sites. These sites can offer many good resources for literacy students and are much more developed than the rather newer ones specifically for adult literacy. However, care needs to be taken in choosing the activities to use as some are biased towards pronunciation and idiom that would be inappropriate to native English speakers. These sites will also be an invaluable resource as more non-English speakers are referred to community learning services.

## Part 3: Websites

Websites that contain both literacy and numeracy activities are mentioned under both sections.

### 1 Literacy

#### a) Adult Basic Skills Resource Centre for students and tutors

URL: <http://members.aol.com/skillsworkshop> (no www)

This site leads to a wide variety of literacy and numeracy resources linked the UK Adult Literacy Core Curriculum. Much of the material has to be downloaded in worksheets form but there are a good number of on-line interactive activities.

#### b) Cambridge Training & Development Ltd (CTAD)

URL: [www.ctad.co.uk/home/resources/games.htm](http://www.ctad.co.uk/home/resources/games.htm)

URL: [www.ctad.co.uk/basil/learner/games/games.asp](http://www.ctad.co.uk/basil/learner/games/games.asp)

These sites have some short word and number games at different levels. There are two versions of a Hangman game called Wallwhacker, one with clues and the other without. An another game concentrates on expanding common elisions such as "I'll", "they're". There is also a Punctuation exercise that looks quite challenging. These sites could provide a good starting point but are of time limited interest. They are useful for learners with learning disabilities. The second URL is aimed at this group although it contains the Punctuation exercise.

#### c) Blackstone Valley Chapter RI Arc

URL: [www.bvcriarc.org/learningweb](http://www.bvcriarc.org/learningweb)

The mission of this American organisation is "to help people with developmental disabilities secure the opportunity to chose and realize their goals of where and how they live, learn, work and play. " This site provides some good activities using graphics. Activities range from very basic colour and letter recognition and matching words to graphics through sentence construction to some more sophisticated games involving good reading and numeracy skills. To my mind the written material is a bit too small and there is the occasional glitch, for example a missing graphic in Level1 Word Quiz 1 However, by and large, it offers some good interesting material and has the potential to be of more lasting use than CTAD.

#### **d) Wisconsin Online Resource Center - ABE/ESL Section**

URL: [www.wisc-online.com/index.htm](http://www.wisc-online.com/index.htm)

This site leads to several one-off interactive lessons, for example "To Too & Two" or looking at adjectives. The presentation is very simple and clear.

#### **e) BBC Skillswise**

URL: [www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/index.shtml)

This site has a cornucopia of user friendly literacy activities and games. Some are interactive while others are worksheets and factsheets. I experienced the occasional glitch in accessing some parts of the site, getting error messages when trying to access the worksheets. I also found the slow rate of download of the games was irritating but this might not apply to all systems.

#### **f) QUIA**

URL: [www.quia.com/web](http://www.quia.com/web)

This is a huge site offering interactive games and activities across an impressive range of subjects and topics. It is free to use the existing activities including Flashcards, Pairs, Columns and multiple-choice quizzes. Sometimes individual activities can take a long time to load.

There is also a facility to create your own topics (See Make Your Own Materials).

#### **g) The National Adult Literacy Agency of Ireland**

URL: [www.literacytools.ie/index.cfm?page=home](http://www.literacytools.ie/index.cfm?page=home)

This site has some useful online exercises. These are still in the pilot phase but are very attractive and user friendly.

### **1.1 English as Second Language Sites**

#### **a) Interesting things for ESL Students**

URL: [www.manythings.org](http://www.manythings.org)

**b) Internet TESL Journal**

URL: <http://a4esl.org>

**c) Dave's ESL Café**

URL: [www.pacificnet.net/%7Eesperling/eslcafe.html](http://www.pacificnet.net/%7Eesperling/eslcafe.html)

These three sites are made up of games and quizzes submitted by a wide variety of people. There is some overlap and some of the activities are much better than others. **Charles Kelly** is the name to look out for. He has submitted an interesting piece of experimental work at [www.manythings.org/pp/sentence\\_singer\\_2.html](http://www.manythings.org/pp/sentence_singer_2.html) using speech and music for sentence construction.

**d) Belgian ESL Site**

URL: [www.smic.be/smic5022/](http://www.smic.be/smic5022/)

This site has with a number of free online English Exercises using a variety of activities such as gap filling and multiple choice. It is aimed primarily at ESL learners but some of the exercises could also be used with native English speakers. The exercises are weighted with 2 stars signifying the easiest level. This is not a particularly attractive site with the preferred font as Times New Roman. Although European in origin some of the exercises are American.

**e) The British Council**

URL: [www.learnenglish.org.uk](http://www.learnenglish.org.uk)

This is a good site that has a host of activities and links that would also be useful for native English Speakers. Some of the activities require the user to register while others are freely available. I did not find the visual look of the games very accessible as the point size was rather small.

## **1.2 Topic Based Reading & Activities**

There do not appear to be all that many online resources for literacy based around hobbies and interests. This section contains those

that were found during the Internet search and others sites that could be used to encourage reading.

#### **a) Football Culture**

URL: [www.footballculture.net/footballenglish/index.html](http://www.footballculture.net/footballenglish/index.html)

This is a joint initiative between the BBC and the British Council. It offers a wide variety of activities based around the game and it does appear to be suitable for football fanatics regardless of age. A Teachers' Handbook can be downloaded to accompany the activities.

#### **b) Cinema**

URL: [www.hugemoviequiz.com](http://www.hugemoviequiz.com)

This site offers hangman type quizzes on various cinema related topics. It includes photographs of movie stars as clues. It is an excellent site with good clear instructions.

#### **c) American Newspapers**

URL: <http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/>

URL: [www.cdlponline.org/news.html](http://www.cdlponline.org/news.html)

These two sites use Newspapers as the basis for literacy learning. They offer abridged and outline versions of real stories from the papers and link these to further activities.

URL: [www.keynews.org](http://www.keynews.org)

This is an online newspaper aimed at new readers. It requires a high level of reading ability and does not have any linked activities.

Obviously all these sites have a strong American bias but nonetheless could be useful.

### **1.3 Writing by Adult Learners**

#### **a) Amity Clubs**

URL: [www.amity.org.uk](http://www.amity.org.uk)

Amity Reading Clubs based in London "aim to provide the best literacy tuition enabling adults with special learning difficulties in literacy to take charge of their own lives." This site publishes students' writing.

**b) Gatehouse Publishing**

URL: [www.gatehousebooks.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.gatehousebooks.org.uk/index.htm)

This is the site of a long-established literacy project in Manchester. Details of their publications of writings by adult learners can be found on this site but the full texts are only available for purchase in hard copy and tape.

**1.4 Health and Healthy Living**

Health Living is another area where there have been developments in interactive websites.

**a) Food Standards Agency**

URL: [www.foodstandards.gov.uk/scotland/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk/scotland/)

The Food Standards Agency has produced some quizzes about healthy eating. These can be accessed in the games area of the site. They are very short, highly graphical and quite fun.

**b) National Adult Literacy Agency of Ireland**

URL: <http://literacy.hosting365.ie/agent/start.asp>

This site has online quizzes covering some common health concerns such as mammogram and when to call the doctor. These quizzes have a speech option

**c) Nibble Directory**

URL: [www.umass.edu/nibble/director.html](http://www.umass.edu/nibble/director.html)

This American site offers multiple choice quizzes on a variety of topics.

**d) Medline**

URL: [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorial.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorial.html)

This is undoubtedly the best health site offering a huge range of tutorials on medical and health-related topics. They are not were particularly interactive but they are beautifully presented with clear print, graphics and speech.

## 2 Numeracy

As with literacy the term "basic" when used in relation to numeracy can have a very wide range of meaning. Many of the sites I found require quite a high level of prior knowledge however there are some that are more appropriate.

### a) **Adult Basic Skills Resource Centre for students and tutors**

URL: <http://members.aol.com/skillsworkshop> (no www)

This site leads to a wide variety of literacy and numeracy resources linked the UK Adult Literacy Core Curriculum. Much of the material has to be downloaded in worksheets form but there are a good number of on-line interactive activities.

### b) **Cambridge Teaching and Development Ltd**

URL: [www.ctad.co.uk/home/resources/games.htm](http://www.ctad.co.uk/home/resources/games.htm)

URL: [www.ctad.co.uk/basil/learner/games/games.asp](http://www.ctad.co.uk/basil/learner/games/games.asp)

These sites have two very basic number games - writing out numbers up to ten and counting on a plus and minus timeline up to 5.

### c) **BBC Skillwise**

URL: [www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/numbers/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/numbers/index.shtml)

This site has a large number of activities starting at a fairly basic level. As with their literacy page I found some problems in accessing some of the activities.

### d) **BBC Mathematics Games Wheel**

URL: [www.bbc.co.uk/education/mathsfile/gameswheel.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/mathsfile/gameswheel.html)

The activities require at least a basic knowledge of mathematical functions.

### e) **Wisconsin Online Resource Center - ABE/ESL Section**

URL: [www.wisc-online.com/index.htm](http://www.wisc-online.com/index.htm)

This site contains some numeracy activities although some of the mathematical concepts seem quite complex. However, the presentation is very simple and clear

f) **Funbrain**

URL: [www.funbrain.com/cashreg/index.html](http://www.funbrain.com/cashreg/index.html)

This site has a money handling game. Although it is an American site there is an option to change to sterling before starting the game. The object is to click on the coins to calculate the amount of change from a sale. These go back into the Piggy Bank. This site could have a better appearance but it is at a good simple level.

g) **A + Math**

URL: [www.aplusmath.com](http://www.aplusmath.com)

This is a really good site for basic numeracy. It has flashcards and bingo games covering the basic mathematical functions and is not age specific. It also has online worksheets that can be submitted for correction. Alternatively these can be printed off and completed offline.

h) **Quia**

URL: [www.quia.com/web](http://www.quia.com/web)

This site has 20 mathematical activities, mainly requiring some knowledge. The Money handling activity uses American Currency and is not recommended. Some of the activities take a while to load.

### **3 Computers and the Internet**

Once again what is meant by basic ICT skills varies from site to site. It is really quite difficult to find interactive sites that assume no knowledge at all and even more difficult to find one that does not assume good reading skills.

#### **a) BBC Webwise**

URL: [www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/learn](http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/learn)

This site has an interactive tutorial on using the mouse and keyboard for complete novices before starting the Webwise course. There is quite a lot of reading involved. This program would be greatly improved with a speech option.

#### **b) LearntheNet**

URL: [www.learnthenet.com/english/index.html](http://www.learnthenet.com/english/index.html)

This American site has some well written guides to using the Internet and also has a quiz and crossword to test knowledge.

#### **c) Quia**

URL: [www.quia.com/web](http://www.quia.com/web)

This site has a Test your Computer knowledge quiz. It can take quite a time to load.

#### **d) Common Knowledge**

URL: [www.ckglasgow.org.uk](http://www.ckglasgow.org.uk)

This voluntary agency in Glasgow is developing some online courses for adults with learning disabilities.

#### **e) Palm Beach County Library System**

URL: <http://www.pbclibrary.org/mousing>

This site gives allows new users to become familiar with using a mouse.

## Personal Development & Assessment Tools

None of the activities accessed on the sites in this section should be regarded as diagnostic. However some of the activities available are interesting and good fun as well as giving both learner and trainer some insight as to strengths and weaknesses and the best ways to proceed with learning.

### **a) Inside-out Training Company**

URL: [www.lifelong-learning.org.uk/](http://www.lifelong-learning.org.uk/)

This site has a section called the Four Secrets of Effective Learning that can be quite useful for building confidence. This is an attractive site with a grassroots feel to it.

## **3.1 Online Tests & Quizzes**

### **a) The Basic Skills Agency**

URL: [www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)

This site offers three short "test your skill" activities. The first one is on its & it's; the second on guessing words containing the letters "ui" and the third is on calculating change. These activities are designed to encourage visitors to seek help if they have difficulty in handling them. Although they are not presented in a particularly attractive way, they could be a useful short-term resource.

### **b) The Department for Education and Skills**

URL: [www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/learning](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/learning)

This site allows access to practice versions of the National Test for Adult Literacy and Numeracy in England and Wales that was launched in September 2002. These are based on everyday activities such as deciding what to watch on TV or planning a journey. They are not for absolute beginners requiring a bit of reading before you start.

### **c) All the Tests and Emode**

URL: [www.allthetests.com](http://www.allthetests.com)

URL: [www.emode.com/shop](http://www.emode.com/shop)

These commercial sites give access to all sorts of tests by online questionnaire. There is a heavy bias towards IQ tests which may not be appropriate but there are plenty of others on Health, Relationships, How your Brain Works and Your Real Age. These can be quite interesting and fun. They are free but they tend to offer the choice of purchasing a full report for around \$15. This can be ignored.

### **3.2 Learning Styles Questionnaires**

There are several learning style questionnaires available on the Internet. None of these give a definite diagnosis of dyslexia or other learning difficulty but can give an indication that a particular way of learning may lead to greater success.

#### **a) VARK**

URL: [www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire](http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire)

The VARK questionnaire is often used in dyslexia to establish learning styles. It is an interesting questionnaire as it seems to be the only one that allows you to give more than one answer. Having completed the questionnaire and had it assessed immediately, you can download study strategy helpsheets linked to the particular learning style identified.

#### **b) Getting On**

URL: [www.getting-on.co.uk/toolkit/learnstyles.htm](http://www.getting-on.co.uk/toolkit/learnstyles.htm)

This is much simpler questionnaire allowing only yes or no answers and distinguishing between auditory and visual learners only.

#### **c) Instines**

URL: [www.artificialrelevance.com](http://www.artificialrelevance.com)

The Instines program claims to be 98% accurate in identifying dyslexia. It can not be accessed via the Internet but a demonstration copy can be ordered. This program is more than a straight questionnaire and is well worth a look.

## **4 And Just for Fun**

There are several mainly American sites that give access to a large number of word games and general knowledge quizzes. These tend to be either too complex or aimed at children. However, it is useful to check out the sites to see if there is something that would suit a particular individual as some are themed round hobbies and interests. Games from Games House need to be downloaded for a free trial period while the other sites can be accessed on the Internet.

## **4.1 Word and Number Games**

### **a) Learning with Puzzles**

URL: [www.heartvalues.com/learningwithpuzzles.html](http://www.heartvalues.com/learningwithpuzzles.html)

### **b) Funbrain:**

URL: [www.funbrain.com](http://www.funbrain.com)

### **c) Gameshouse**

URL: [www.gamehouse.com](http://www.gamehouse.com)

### **d) Puzzability**

URL: [www.puzzability.com/sampler/index.html](http://www.puzzability.com/sampler/index.html)

### **e) Fun Stuff**

URL: [www.unclefed.com/FunStuff/index.html](http://www.unclefed.com/FunStuff/index.html)

## 4.2 Jigsaws

Computer generated jigsaws with the facility to create your own using pictures or words can be downloaded from the Internet. The level of difficulty can vary from a four-piece puzzle up to 1000 pieces with the choice of either straight edges or classic jigsaw shapes.

### a) Brains Breaker

URL: [www.brainsbreaker.com](http://www.brainsbreaker.com)

The full version of this programme costs \$19.95. There does not seem any time limit on the free demonstration version but the options are slightly restricted. Also purchasing prompts appear on screen from time to time.

### b) Jigsaw Mania

URL: [www.inertiasoftware.com/jigsaw/index.htm](http://www.inertiasoftware.com/jigsaw/index.htm)

The full version of this program is \$17.95 but the instructions are more difficult to follow and the end product is not as attractive as Brains Breaker.

## 5 Make Your Own Materials

Many of the sites that offer interactive activities have the facility for practitioners to design their own materials using the templates provided. There are two that stand out as the end products are attractive and easy to use.

### a) Quia

URL: [www.quia.com](http://www.quia.com)

This site allows you to design online. There are eleven different activities including Flash Cards, Matching Pairs, Multiple Choice, Cloze and Hangman. They can be designed either as separate activities or linked round a theme or grammar point. Designing the material is very simple and the results are available immediately. It is necessary to register online to access the Instructor Zone. There is a 30-day free trial period after which there is an annual charge as follows:

#### Rate Card

Quia's standard annual pricing is \$49 per instructor. Student access is free, regardless of the student population.

For groups of 10 or more instructors, Quia offers discounted pricing. For larger groups, Quia offers 50-instructor subscription bundles at deep discounts.

Our basic group rates are as follows:

\$49/instructor for 1-9 instructors (approx. £32)

\$39/instructor for 10 or more instructors

For group licenses of 50 or more instructors, or for site licenses, we offer the following pricing:

Number of Instructors	Annual Price	Effective Price per Instructor
50	\$950	\$19.00
100	\$1500	\$15.00
150	\$2250	\$15.00
200	\$2800	\$14.00
250	\$3500	\$14.00
300	\$3900	\$13.00
400	\$5000	\$12.50
500	\$6000	\$12.00

### b) Hot Potatoes

URL: [web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/](http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/)

This program was created by the Research and Development team at the University of Victoria in Canada. Unlike QUIA it has to be downloaded to your own computer before you can use it. This could be a problem on networked computers and should not be done without first consulting the ICT Department.

"The Hot Potatoes suite includes six applications, enabling you to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises for the World Wide Web. It is free for use by individuals or educational institutions which are non-profit making, on the condition that the material they produce using the program is freely available to anyone via the WWW.

However it is necessary to purchase a licence under any of the following conditions:

- You are working for a company or corporation.
- You are in business for yourself.
- You charge money for access to the material you make with Hot Potatoes.
- You do not make the material freely available through the WWW. "

Hot Potatoes give a much more sophisticated end product than Quia but it is more difficult to understand the design process. This is would be the software to use if a corporate decision was made to design a suite of activities for a service. It would be too time-consuming to expect practitioners to design their own material using Hot Potatoes.

### **c) Language Teaching Clipart Library**

URL: <http://web.uvic.ca/hcmc/clipart/>

This graphics gallery can be downloaded to incorporate into the finished Hot Potatoes product.

## 6 Potentially Useful Sites

These sites have not been assessed in this research

### 6.1 Workbooks, Worksheets and Lesson Plans Online

Several sites give access to downloadable lesson plans and worksheets.

#### a) **ARK suite of Basic Skills workbooks.**

URL: <http://homepages.ed.ac.uk/calarks/arks/materials.html>

This site gives access to ARK's Keys to Learning suite of Workbooks covering Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and Personal Development.

#### b) **Log onto Learn**

URL: [www.logintolearn.com/txt/txtlrnmat.html](http://www.logintolearn.com/txt/txtlrnmat.html)

This North Lanarkshire site allows you to download some good looking workbooks on Windows 2000 Applications - again lots of reading. It also has some interesting looking games and a quiz but there were loading difficulties.

#### c) **Literacies in Scotland**

URL: [www.literaciesinscotland.org.uk/resourcesindex.html](http://www.literaciesinscotland.org.uk/resourcesindex.html)

#### d) **American Sites**

URL: [www.research.umbc.edu/~ira/lessweb.html](http://www.research.umbc.edu/~ira/lessweb.html)

URL: <http://members.aol.com/skillsworkshop/plans.htm>

URL: [www.nwlincs.org/NWLINCSEWEB/Lessons.htm](http://www.nwlincs.org/NWLINCSEWEB/Lessons.htm)

URL: [www.nifl.gov/nifl/fellowship/reports/susanc/inthome.htm](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/fellowship/reports/susanc/inthome.htm)

## 6.2 Software

These sites give information about software on CD-ROM and other media that is available for purchase.

### a) Avanti

URL: [www.avantibooks.com/cgi-bin/avantibooks.storefront](http://www.avantibooks.com/cgi-bin/avantibooks.storefront)

Source of software and books for adult literacy and numeracy

### b) Protea Software

URL: [www.proteatextware.com.au/](http://www.proteatextware.com.au/)

Demonstration copies of Protea software can be ordered by email

### c) Becta

[www.becta.org.uk](http://www.becta.org.uk)

This site has a useful database of software

### d) Special Needs Software

URL: [www.inclusive.co.uk/](http://www.inclusive.co.uk/)

URL: [www.dyslexic.com](http://www.dyslexic.com)

URL: [www.wida.co.uk/noframes/party/cl.htm](http://www.wida.co.uk/noframes/party/cl.htm)

## **Part 4: Outline Training Course**

### **Training Course for Practitioners**

#### **Course Aims**

- To motivate practitioners to use non-traditional methods
- To highlight the benefits to learners of learning online and of using computer software
- To highlight the benefits to practitioners of teaching online and of using computer software
- To encourage the innovative use of materials to suit different needs

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Trainees will

- have confidence to use online interactive materials with a learner in a one-to-one or small group setting
- understand the benefits of using interactive materials to themselves as practitioners and to the learner.
- be aware of when and when not to use interactive online learning with learners
- have designed an online interactive suite of linked activities suitable for use with a learner
- have tested their activity in a real teaching or tutoring situation and adapted it as necessary.

#### **Who should attend?**

Trainees should have prior experience of working with adults. Trainees should have basic computer skills and a familiarity with accessing the Internet.

#### **Venue Requirements**

Computer suite with one workstation per trainee (Maximum 8)  
Internet Access  
PowerPoint Projector and Screen

#### **Course Duration**

1.5 days, plus Pre-course Preparation

## **Pre-course Preparation**

Trainees will be asked to bring with them an idea for an activity they would like to use with a learner. This could be to illustrate:

- a grammar or spelling point
- a mathematical function
- vocabulary related to a particular topic

Guidelines will be issued to trainees to help in this process

## **Course Programme**

### **Day 1**

Introductions (*Round Table discussion*)

Prior Experience

Perceptions of the Internet

Preconceptions about using the Internet for Learning

Looking at the Continuum in Learning and Teaching: (*Groupwork*)

Traditional Methods - Using Computer Software -

Using the Internet

The Internet and Learning (*Presentation*)

Background & Research

Coffee break

Using the Internet for Learning & Teaching (*Groupwork/Discussion*)

Pros & Cons for Learning

Pros & Cons for Teaching

Looking at Interactive Sites (*Practical Session*)

Feedback (*General discussion*)

Lunch

Designing a Suite of Activities (*Practical Session*)

Feedback (*General Discussion*)

Preparation for Day 2

### **Day 2**

This will be a feedback session 4 weeks after Day 1 during which time trainees should have tried out their online activity with a learner.

## Part 5: Conclusion

The Literacies Learning on the Web project had two main aims. Firstly, it aimed to identify good quality online interactive resources for tutors to use with adult literacy & numeracy learners. The second aim was to design a training course to give practitioners the skills and knowledge to make best use of these resources to the benefit of the adult learner.

Although some suitable adult-oriented software has been available for several years, the Internet has greatly increased the potential for making such material available to practitioners and learners. It has introduced a much greater element of interactivity than is possible with offline computer software. It has also made material available at a much lower cost.

However, this proliferation brings its own problems as there is no control over the quality of the material on offer. The Internet searching throughout this project has concentrated on identifying a range of high quality sites covering all aspects of literacies work and rejecting those sites that might result in negative experiences for the practitioner and adult learner. Although the list of sites identified and assessed in the main body of this report is by no means exhaustive it will give practitioners and learners a wide choice to start off the process of Internet Learning.

Identifying the sites however is only the first part of the process. The list itself will be of little value if practitioners do not feel confident to make use of it. The outline Training course is designed to give practitioners that confidence. It will look at the whole field of learning on the Internet and will examine the benefits and disadvantages of Internet Learning. It will offer practitioners hands-on experience of using existing sites and the chance to design and produce interactive material to their own specification

It is anticipated that providing practitioners in Inverclyde with this tailored training course and the recommended list of sites will not only increase their skills but will also awaken in them an enthusiasm for using this new and exciting vehicle for learning.