

## **Background report Norway**

**What works in innovation in education**  
Improving education for adults with basic skills needs  
through formative assessment

## Foreword

This background report is a part of the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) study of teaching and assessment for adults with basic skills needs. The report is a result of cooperation between the Norwegian Institute for Adult Education (Vox) and the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Vox has been responsible for the general management of the project while the Directorate has been responsible for the report.

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## Purpose of the study and the background report

The OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) will conduct a two-year international study of exemplary teaching and assessment for adults with basic skills needs. The study, "Improving Teaching and Learning for Adults with Basic Skills Needs through Formative Assessment", will address significant gaps in understanding of "what works", for whom and under what circumstances, and will identify policy levers that may improve the quality of provision for this population.

This background report is intended to further understanding of challenges with respect to policy, research and practice in this emerging field of interest. The background report includes description of:

- The nature and scale of challenges facing Norway in regard to adult basic skills education
- Any major national or regional programmes or policies developed to meet the needs of adults with basic skills needs; such as legislation, influential white papers or other policy documents; widely distributed tools, materials or guidelines to support formative approaches to assessment in adult basic skills programmes
- What is known of instructors' professional status, working conditions, as well as opportunities for training and professional development within the adult basic skills sector
- Gaps in provision and take-up
- Assessment policies/structures
- Research, guiding principles or ideas that have influenced the development of policies related to teaching and assessment in the adult basic skills sector
- The "state of the art" in formative assessment policy and practice – that is, information that will help determine where countries are located in terms of their knowledge base and promotion of formative assessment and innovative teaching methods. The report is also intended to help guiding interviews and document reviews for the case study research.

## Definitions

The study involves three main concepts which can all be understood and used in different ways – *adults*, *basic skills*, and *formative assessment*. Throughout the process of writing this report it has become evident that there is a need for a framework and clear definitions. Hence, the next paragraphs will describe the scope of the issues discussed in Background Report on Norway – Improving teaching and learning for adults with basic skills needs through formative assessment.

### *Adults*

The concept "adult learners" comprise at least two quite different categories of students. On the one hand, there are adult learners lacking formal education at various levels. The education of this group is aimed at "filling the gaps" in their previous basic education. The other group consists of adults taking further education over and above their current educational level (Opheim 2004).

In this study the target group is adults with basic skills needs, aged 16 and upwards, who belong to the first mentioned category of adult learners.

### *Basic skills*

The definition of the concept “basic skills” is constantly under debate both in Norway and internationally. In Norway the definition so far has been partly influenced by, and must be understood in relation to, the notion of competence as used in vocational education, and refers to the ability to master a complex challenge or execute a complex activity or task. The important thing is that the pupil or apprentice should be able to make use of his/her knowledge, attitudes and skills. Another strong influence in defining competence and basic skills in recent years has come from international studies and projects in which Norway has participated.

Within the field of adult education it may be most appropriate to look to the definition of skills as used in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL). In this survey four skills domains are identified: prose and documentation literacy, numeracy, and problem solving. In this report the main focus will be on prose and documentation literacy, and numeracy.

ALL definitions:

*“Literacy is using printed and written information to function in society to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.”*

*“Numeracy is the knowledge and skills required to effectively manage and respond to the mathematical demands of diverse situations.”*

The brief definition of numeracy is complemented by a broader definition of numerate behaviour: *“Nurate behaviour is observed when people manage a situation of solve a problem in a real context; it involves responding to information about mathematical ideas that may be represented in a range of ways; it requires the activation of a range of enabling knowledge, factors and processes.”*

Both concepts are to be understood in a broad sense. For example does “literacy” entail more than just “reading”. People read different materials for different purposes - and apply different skills for specific purposes in specific contexts. Likewise does the concept of “numeracy” mean more than simply “knowing school mathematics”, and relates to diverse forms of situation management, calling for a range of different responses.

About 80,000 people participated in the survey, of which the Norwegian sample consisted of 5,300 people. The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) showed that about 30 per cent of the adult population in Norway scored below level 3 (the critical level) in literacy (see Annex IV for level descriptions). This estimate would amount to 900,000 people in Norway with dysfunctional literacy skills, as defined by international levels of difficulty (Gabrielsen 2005).

Per cent of populations aged 16 to 65 at each skills level, 2003

|                                   | Level 1 |       | Level 2 |       | Level 3 |       | Level 4/5        |       |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|-------|
| <b>A. Prose literacy scale</b>    |         |       |         |       |         |       |                  |       |
| Bermuda                           | 12.5    | (0.8) | 25.6    | (1.4) | 35.6    | (1.4) | 26.3             | (1.1) |
| Canada                            | 14.6    | (0.4) | 27.3    | (0.7) | 38.6    | (0.9) | 19.5             | (0.8) |
| Italy                             | 47.0    | (1.5) | 32.5    | (1.1) | 17.0    | (0.8) | 3.5              | (0.4) |
| Norway                            | 7.9     | (0.7) | 26.2    | (1.1) | 45.3    | (1.4) | 20.6             | (0.7) |
| Nuevo Leon, Mexico                | 43.2    | (1.2) | 45.8    | (1.4) | 10.3    | (0.5) | 0.7 <sup>1</sup> | (0.2) |
| Switzerland                       | 15.9    | (1.2) | 36.3    | (1.1) | 35.7    | (1.9) | 12.1             | (0.9) |
| United States                     | 20.0    | (0.8) | 32.6    | (1.1) | 34.6    | (1.2) | 12.8             | (1.0) |
| <b>B. Document literacy scale</b> |         |       |         |       |         |       |                  |       |
| Bermuda                           | 16.6    | (1.0) | 29.5    | (1.7) | 32.7    | (1.7) | 21.1             | (0.9) |
| Canada                            | 15.6    | (0.4) | 27.0    | (0.7) | 36.9    | (1.0) | 20.5             | (0.6) |
| Italy                             | 49.2    | (1.4) | 31.4    | (1.2) | 15.8    | (1.0) | 3.6              | (0.4) |
| Norway                            | 8.9     | (0.5) | 23.5    | (1.1) | 39.7    | (1.1) | 27.9             | (0.8) |
| Nuevo Leon, Mexico                | 43.8    | (0.9) | 40.3    | (0.9) | 14.2    | (0.8) | 1.7              | (0.2) |
| Switzerland                       | 14.5    | (0.9) | 34.5    | (1.5) | 35.8    | (1.8) | 15.1             | (1.4) |
| United States                     | 20.2    | (1.0) | 32.3    | (1.4) | 32.6    | (1.1) | 15.0             | (1.0) |
| <b>C. Numeracy scale</b>          |         |       |         |       |         |       |                  |       |
| Bermuda                           | 21.4    | (1.0) | 32.7    | (1.7) | 29.9    | (1.5) | 16.0             | (0.9) |
| Canada                            | 19.5    | (0.5) | 30.3    | (0.7) | 33.4    | (0.9) | 16.9             | (0.6) |
| Italy                             | 43.5    | (1.2) | 36.7    | (1.1) | 16.8    | (0.8) | 3.0              | (0.4) |
| Norway                            | 10.6    | (0.6) | 29.6    | (1.0) | 41.5    | (1.5) | 18.4             | (0.9) |
| Switzerland                       | 8.6     | (0.7) | 30.7    | (1.5) | 37.8    | (1.3) | 22.9             | (1.2) |
| United States                     | 26.8    | (0.9) | 31.8    | (1.1) | 28.8    | (1.0) | 12.7             | (1.1) |
| <b>D. Problem solving scale</b>   |         |       |         |       |         |       |                  |       |
| Bermuda                           | 33.1    | (1.4) | 36.8    | (2.0) | 23.6    | (1.3) | 6.5              | (0.6) |
| Canada                            | 29.7    | (0.8) | 38.8    | (0.9) | 26.2    | (0.8) | 5.4              | (0.5) |
| Italy                             | 67.8    | (0.9) | 22.8    | (0.8) | 8.1     | (0.6) | 1.2              | (0.2) |
| Norway                            | 23.3    | (1.3) | 37.5    | (1.0) | 32.0    | (1.2) | 7.2              | (0.5) |
| Switzerland                       | 28.8    | (1.3) | 37.3    | (1.5) | 26.5    | (1.0) | 7.3              | (0.7) |

1. Unreliable estimate.

Notes: The state of Nuevo Leon in Mexico fielded the IALS quantitative literacy assessment rather than the ALL numeracy assessment. Although closely related conceptually, these two scales cannot be directly compared.

Switzerland (Italian), the United States, and the state of Nuevo Leon in Mexico did not field the problem solving skills domain.

Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2003.

The participants in the survey are a very heterogeneous group of adults. The ALL survey suggests that it is problematic to relate the results directly to one group of people based on educational background, (e.g. people who have not completed primary or lower secondary education). According to the survey, adults in all categories, also those with higher education, could score below level 3 in reading skills. On the other hand educational level and reading skills are related. Moreover, the ALL survey found that age and occupation did have an impact on the results.

There is however a discussion going on in Norway concerning the concept of “critical” level, due to the fact that many of the Norwegians who scored below level 3 in the ALL survey do have a job and seem to function well in everyday life.

The ALL survey also found that the results for adult immigrants were especially low in comparison with the Norwegian-born respondents. Of the immigrant population 69 percent are at risk (level 1 on at least one of the literacy tests), as opposed to 12 percent of the total adult population.

In the ALL survey assessments were conducted in the official language(s) of the participating countries. This means that the results do not give information on whether the low performance is because the respondents lack reading skills in general, or because they lack skills in Norwegian language. The immigrant population of Norway is a very heterogeneous group, consisting of people with higher education as well as people with little or no education.

### *Formative assessment*

The definition of formative assessment used in the current report complies with the suggestion offered by Scriven (Scriven 1967), and further promoted by Bloom and his collaborators (Bloom et al 1971), which is more or less in line with the working definition offered in the OECD study:

Formative assessment refers to frequent, interactive assessments of student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately (OECD 2005:21, Allal & Lopez 2005:244).

One way of conceptualising the distinction between formative and summative assessment is to relate assessment to *intent* and to *contract* (Lauvås et al 2000, Lauvås 2002). In formative assessment, the intent is to assess in the form of intervention in the learners' learning process, in the sense that feedback is an essential component of high quality learning. In summative assessment, the intent is to portray the learning results after learning has taken place in order to control, certify or rank individuals. In formative assessment the contract is to identify learning needs and to identify learning activities that may bring the learner steps ahead. It is not a good idea for the learner to 'fake good' – that only makes the assessment more difficult and less powerful as a learning tool. In summative assessment, the task for the learner is the opposite; to demonstrate competencies as best performance.<sup>1</sup>

The renewed conception of this distinction has come about on the basis of empirical evidence of the potential benefits of formative assessment in the learning process. In particular, the frequently quoted meta study (1998 and other works by Black & Wiliam, as well as work by Sadler in Australia have been influential. Sadler's rephrasing of terminology has had a strong impact: assessment FOR learning as opposed to assessment OF learning implies that formative assessment, in fact, can be a far more powerful lever to promote learning, as compared with its summative counterpart.

## **Legislation**

Adult education and training have been an important issue within the educational field in Norway for a long time. The Act on Adult Education (voksenopplæringsloven) was passed in 1976. This was not an educational act that gave rights to the individual, but a manifestation of the intention that adults should have the opportunity to receive education subsidised by the government<sup>2</sup>. The Act on Adult Education is still valid but parts of it have become individual

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<sup>1</sup> The distinction between summative and formative assessment may carry an intuitive appeal to teachers. Sometimes formative assessment is thought of as a humane, gentle form of assessment, almost an aspect of a "caring relation" to students who struggle to cope. The "real" assessment is then the summative, in which stern, impartial judgements are made, most often with evident consequences for the student. This way of understanding the distinction reduces formative assessment to a subsidiary position. Consequently, formative assessment cannot be applied as a potent lever to promote learning. Power is only associated with summative assessment. In order to make students study, then, summative assessment is the only measure to be applied and formative assessment can be added as a part of the teaching process, when time permits.

<sup>2</sup> One exception to this at the time was the individual right to special education in primary and secondary education. Today this individual right is secured through the Education Act.

rights granted within the Norwegian Education Act (opplæringsloven, 1998) on primary and secondary education, and the Introduction Act (introduksjonsloven, 1993).

So there are three statutory provisions that regulate adult education in Norway: the Act on Adult Education, the Education Act and the Introduction Act. The regulating principle between these three acts is defined by statutory provisions that give individual rights, and statutory provisions that do not give such rights but allocate public grants to independent education organisations that are providers of adult education.

#### *Adults' right to education and assessment of adults' practical competence*

A new chapter in the Education Act gave adults an individual, statutory right to education. The provisions relating to upper secondary education were put into effect on 1 August 2000, while those concerning primary and lower secondary education came into force on 1 August 2002 (see Annex I) .

To exercise the right to upper secondary education, the adult must have been born before 1978, and not have previously completed upper secondary school<sup>3</sup>. The new regulations give adults the right to specially adapted education that takes into account their practical competence, experience and life situation.

Adults who have the right to education at primary and lower secondary level will, if necessary, also have the right to special education on the same conditions as children and young people (see Annex I for statutory provisions on adult education in primary and secondary education).

#### *The Introduction Act*

A new Introduction Act was implemented in September 2003 (obligatory from 1 September 2004). It states that refugees and persons granted residence on political and humanitarian grounds are to be offered a 2-years introductory programme. This arrangement also applies to persons who immigrate in order to be reunited with family members.

In 2005 the Introduction Act was amended. A number of non-EU immigrants who will get their residence permit after 1 September 2005 have a right as well as an obligation to take courses in Norwegian language and social studies. The Act states that immigrants have to participate for 300 hours if they intend to get a permanent resident status and, later on, citizenship. Out of the 300 hours 50 are set aside for Norwegian cultural studies taught in a foreign language the participants can understand. They can apply for further training up to 3,000 hours if they need more time to reach a final level.

Immigrants who enter the country for purposes of family reunification with a Norwegian or Nordic citizen are given classes free of charge. EU citizens, students and au-pairs have to pay for their tuition.

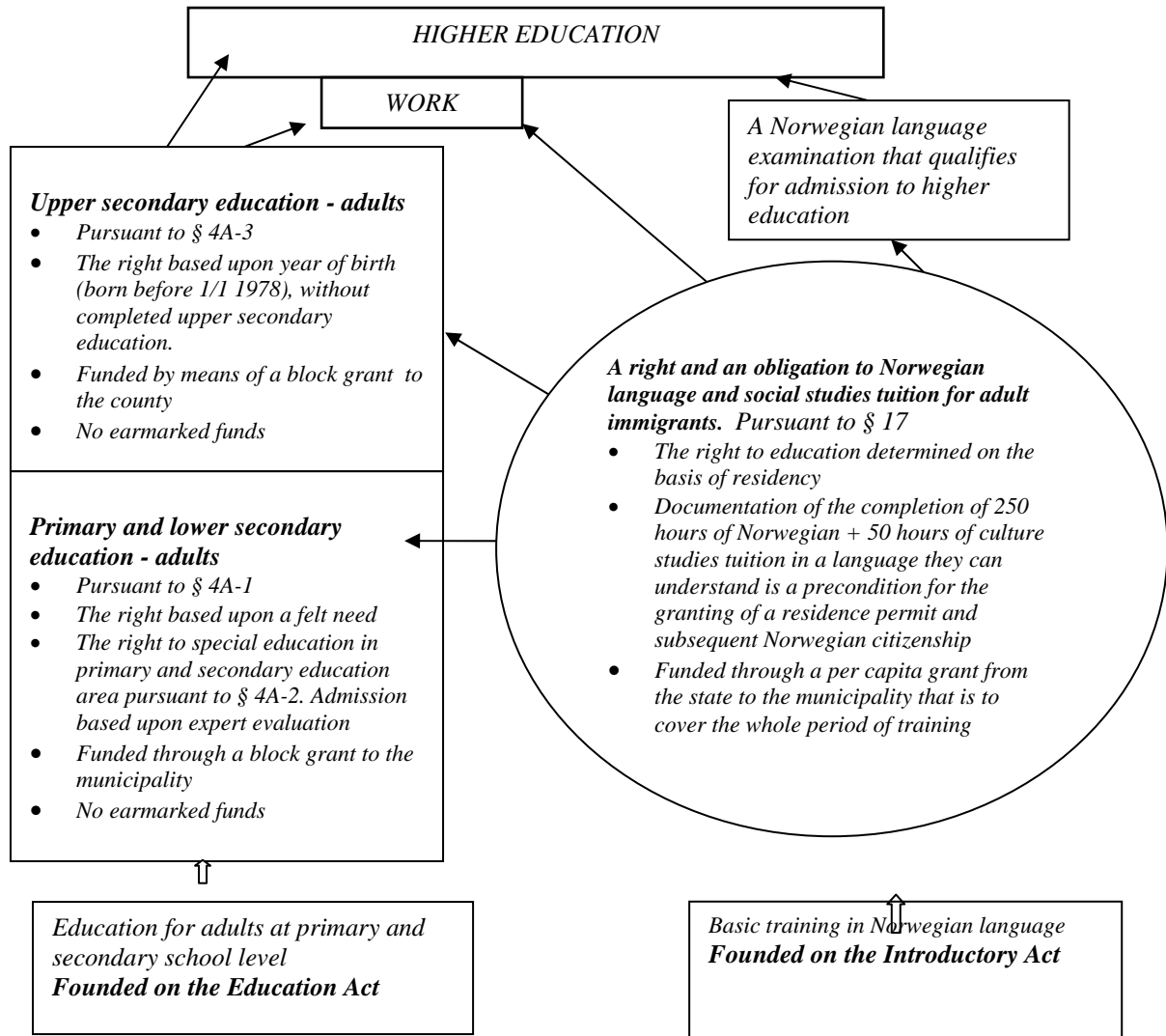
Immigrants who got a residence permit before 1 September 2005 are given free courses in Norwegian in a transitional period of 5 years. Exempt from this provision are EU citizens and asylum seekers. The following illustration is an overview of the system according to the statutory provisions on individual rights.

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<sup>3</sup> 1978 was chosen because young people and adults born after 1978 have rights in accordance with the educational "Reform 94". This reform of upper secondary education was launched to increase participation in upper secondary education. All young people between the ages of 16 and 19 who had completed primary and lower secondary schooling were given the statutory right to a further three years full time study in upper secondary education.



## ADULT EDUCATION BASED ON LEGAL RIGHTS



### Comments on education for adults at primary and secondary school level

- Evaluation and assessment of non-formal competence is a basic principle for admission. This concerns admission into upper secondary school in particular. The evaluation and assessment of non-formal learning may shorten the duration of formal secondary school training toward a diploma or trade certificate
- Adults might attend classes in primary, lower and upper secondary education concurrently

### Comments on Rights and obligation to Norwegian language and culture studies

- The main rule is that immigrants who have provisional residence permits that form the basis for permanent residence permits are entitled to tuition free of charge
- The national curriculum is based upon the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Competence goals in the curriculum are described for 5 proficiencies up to level B2 in CEFR
- The right to free tuition is limited to level B1
- Participants can get tuition on 3 different tracks based on educational background and mother tongue
- Those who need more than 250 hours (this concerns quite a few), can apply for more hours up to a total limit of 3,000 hours
- The curriculum has a special module for those who cannot read or write in their mother tongue
- There are two final Norwegian language exams within the basic training on levels A2 and B. The final exam on level B1 does not qualify for admission into higher education

## **Funding of adult education**

In general the central government provides the bulk of funds required for primary and secondary education to municipalities and counties through a so-called “block grant”. The “block grant” provides for a number of services delivered by municipalities, among them health and social services, as well as primary and lower secondary education. The municipalities are free to decide what proportion of this expenditure to use on education. The municipalities and counties are also free to choose providers of education, either public or private. A similar mechanism applies to upper secondary education, which is the responsibility of the counties. In either case, the grants are not earmarked.

Adult education provided in accordance with the Introduction Act is given as an earmarked (per capita) grant to the municipalities. The subsidy is based on the student’s national background (e.g. non-western/western) and is given for the whole education period. Local authorities, with central government support, administer a relatively extensive programme of education in Norwegian language and social studies for adult immigrants. The Ministry of Labour and Social inclusion (AID) has the financial and legal responsibility for this training, while the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the curriculum.

The government also provides funds for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), i.e., distant learning institutions and study organisations that offer courses within the Education Act and the Act on Adult Education. In addition, The Ministry of Labour and Social inclusion (AID) arranges centrally financed courses for employment seekers, through its Directorate of Labour.

Adult education provided to those who have individual rights in accordance with the Education Act and the Introduction Act is free of charge for the participants. The municipalities and the counties are obliged to offer adult education but they are free to decide on what scale and how it is to organise it.

There is no special funding for adult basic skills education, but there is an opportunity to create special classes in reading, writing and arithmetic within the framework of the Education Act. However, this is an opportunity which is not widely used by the municipalities. The government can also create programmes for special needs groups in order to meet challenges and get more flexible training in connection to the workplace, for instance *Programme for basic skills in working life* (see “National policies on adult education” below).

## **Providers of adult education**

Adult education activities in Norway are undertaken by a number of organisations. As shown previously local authorities (responsible for primary and lower secondary education) and regional authorities (responsible for upper secondary education) receive financial support through the general transfer of funds from the central government. Private schools approved in accordance with the Act relating to Private Schools (“friskoleloven”) can also have adult students.

In addition, a wide range of education activities for adults take place under the auspices of independent study organisations and distant learning institutions. Approved organisations receive direct financial support in accordance with the Act on Adult Education. Through a legally devised system of criteria, adult education organised by such approved associations receive grants from the Government, from a majority of the counties and from many municipalities. The activity in this area is extensive. The study organisations are important

providers of adult learning opportunities in Norway, in addition to the regular public and private providers. These institutions are based on ideas of enlightenment, equality, and democracy. Today there are 19 adult learning associations, representing 435 nationwide adult learning NGOs offering 47,000 courses with 633,000 participants. Of these 55 % are women.

The adult learning associations represent a multitude of interests and ideologies. The largest associations offer a broad range of subjects at several levels, with or without formal exams and parallel programs in the official school system. Other associations emphasise more non-formal adult learning activities, such as organisational training of members, or learning for the development of the local community and sustainable development. Others emphasise political training, or culture and creative, aesthetical and practical topics.

Private schools and institutions offer courses that depend financially on the payment of participant fees.

#### *Some key figures*

- 4 208 participants were registered on examination preparatory courses for adults at compulsory school level in autumn 2003. Of these, 2 360 were women, and a total of 2 354 spoke a minority language (source GSI - Information system for the compulsory education sector).
- In addition, 6 700 receive other forms of adult education at the compulsory education level organized by local authorities. The majority are physically or psychologically handicapped and need special education (source GSI).
- 26,000 pupils in upper secondary education in Autumn 2003 were 20 years of age or more. 14,700 of those were over 25 years of age (source Statistics Norway).
- Approximately 30,000 immigrants and refugees attended courses in Norwegian language and the Norwegian social context (source Statistics Norway).
- Approved organizations had altogether 735 000 participants, 52% of whom were women. They delivered 1 352 000 lessons with a teacher and organized 378 000 lessons without teacher (Appendix 4).
- The most recent figures available from the Directorate of Labour are from 2002. They show that approximately 6,000 participated in employment-related courses and approximately 9,400 in upper secondary courses not covered by the Education Act (Statistics Norway). Slightly over 50% were women. Enrolment on these courses varies widely in keeping with the employment situation, as central authorities give increased support in periods of high unemployment.
- A total of 12 distance learning institutions receive state support. The object is to provide examination preparatory courses at upper secondary or higher level. In 2003 the institutions had a total of 20,000 participants, half of them women, of whom 10,500 followed courses at upper secondary level (Statistics Norway).
- Employers in both the private and public spheres spend considerable amounts on further education and in-service courses for their staff. No official figures are available for these programmes, but costs are estimated at well over ten thousand million NOK.

The Development of Education 2000-2004 National report Norway  
<http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/225897/ICE-rapport.pdf>

## National policies on adult education

### *The Competence Reform*

One central reform with great impact on adult education in general has been the comprehensive Competence Reform. This reform was launched in 1999 in an attempt to improve workplace skills and to promote lifelong learning. It provided resources for public and private companies to participate in about 700 competence building projects. It also led to the establishment of the Norwegian Institute for Adult Education (Vox) ([www.vox.no](http://www.vox.no)). The reform has been evaluated (<http://odin.dep.no/kd/english/topics/education/competence-reform/014061-990031/dok-bn.html>, see also Annex III for further description of the measures of the reform).

The reform has shown that adults to a great extent want to engage in work-related learning activities. One of the measures of the reform was the Competence Building Programme (Kompetanseutviklingsprogrammet, KUP). Through this programme funding was allocated to a wide range of projects that had the workplace as their arena for learning and training. Evaluation of the programme suggests that it has been successful, but that there are reasons to question whether it has managed to reach those with the lowest levels of competence.

### *The government's "Soria Moria statement"*

The parliamentary election in Norway 12 September 2005 brought about a change of government, with the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party entering a coalition. The new government presented its policy in a document called the "Soria Moria statement". The government wants to strengthen the emphasis on measures for the development of competence. Among other issues the government wants to:

- Develop structures for leave of absence and improve the opportunities for education on the workplace
- Secure the fulfilment of adults' rights to primary and secondary education
- Strengthen public information of adult education
- Strengthen the right to validation of non-formal competence
- Promote public support of adult education

In addition, the government suggested in its proposed changes to the National Budget (St.prp. nr.1 Tillegg nr. 1 (2005-2006)) for 2006 that the allocation of public funding to the so-called Programme for Basic Skills in Working Life was to be strengthened.

### *Programme for Basic Skills in Working Life*

Based on the experiences from the Competence Building Programme the government suggests establishing a new programme to enhance basic skills in working life. The Competence Building Programme has shown that education and training combined with a paid job often gives the best learning results, especially when it comes to groups of people with low levels of formal education. The purpose of the programme is to ensure that adults acquire the basic skills they need to meet the requirements of a working life in constant change. The programme will support businesses and public providers of adult education with focus on employees and unemployed with poor basic skills. The education/training shall as far as possible be combined with paid work. The programme is administered by Vox.

### *Report No. 49 to the Storting (2003-2004) – Diversity through Inclusion and Participation – Responsibility and freedom*

According to the report the new cultural and social diversity of the population and a permanent component of recently immigrated inhabitants mean that children in Norway will

have more disparate starting points than was previously the case. This in turn will further increase the importance of school and education. Based on Report No. 30 to the Storting (2002-2003) *Culture for learning* and the *Strategy plan for equal opportunities in practice 2003*, the government believes that its effort to achieve equal educational opportunities constitutes the most important ingredient in preventing the future development of major social and economic differences along ethnic divisions. Report No. 49 to the Storting (2003-2004) proposed to reinforce the statistical base in order to facilitate effective targeted measures for groups in need of special support.

A crucial point in the report is that work provides both social recognition and economic independence. By encouraging young people to get an education, the next vital step is said to be to make sure that they enter the labour market on the same footing as their peers. The report proposes to initiate long-term studies that are to follow groups of descendants with a non-western background in their encounters with the labour market.

[http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/249171/English\\_summary\\_st.meld\\_nr\\_49\\_\(2003-2004\).pdf](http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/249171/English_summary_st.meld_nr_49_(2003-2004).pdf)

#### *Education and training in the correctional services*

In the beginning of 2005 the Government introduced a White Paper on Education and training in the correctional services (Report to the Storting No. 27 (2004-2005)). Research based studies show that 7.6 % of the inmates have not completed their primary and lower secondary education, while 49 % of the prisoners have not completed upper secondary education.

In consequence, the Storting has recognised a need to focus more closely on the socio-economic perspectives of rehabilitation, and refers to the Swedish KrAmi-project as an example of good practice.

In the proposed changes to the National Budget for 2006 the Stoltenberg government increased the grants to education within the correctional services. In addition, the government underscored the need for more documentation of non-formal competence, with a view to promoting forms of education that can be adapted to the needs of the individual. In collaboration with the correctional services the educational sector will initiate a number of pilot projects for the further development and strengthening of educational activities within the correctional services.

### **National tools and guidelines for adult learning**

#### *European Language Portfolio for Adult Immigrants*

In January 2006 the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education presented a preliminary language portfolio for adult immigrants (Språkperm for voksne innvandrere) in Norway, based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The portfolio is supposed to be validated by the Council of Europe.

The European Language Portfolio was developed and piloted by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, between 1998 and 2000. It was launched on a pan-European level during the European Year of Languages as a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. It is a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language - whether at school or outside school - can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences.

The portfolio contains a "language passport" which its owner should update regularly. A grid is provided where his/her language competences can be described in accordance with

common criteria accepted throughout Europe. The language passport may serve as a complement to regular educational certificates. The document also contains a detailed language biography which describes the owner's experiences in each language, and is designed to guide the learners in planning and assessing their progress. Finally, there is a dossier in which examples of personal work and official documents can be kept to illustrate one's language competences (see further description of the European Language Portfolio in annex II or <http://www.cilt.org.uk/qualifications/elp/adultelp.htm>).

*The National curriculum in Norwegian language and social studies for adult immigrants*

The curriculum in Norwegian language and social studies gives no guidance concerning teaching methodology. Therefore a methodological guide has been made, which contains articles relating to the theoretical superstructure in the curriculum. The methodological guide also comprises a website and a DVD with examples of good teaching practice.

*The National curriculum L 97 and L97 S - focussing on adults with basic skills needs*

Guidelines concerning adult education were presented by the Ministry of Education and Research in 1999, to ensure that the principles and content of L97 and L97S were implemented in adult education at primary and lower secondary level.

Inclusive education is a major principle in L97 / L97S. To meet the needs of adults with poor literacy skills the guidelines emphasise the importance of mapping the skills of individual learners in order to provide education that is suited to their needs. The guidelines emphasise the importance of motivation enhancing positive feedback, based on a sense of mastery, for example assessment by the use of portfolios, open ended tasks and a holistic approach.

Another set of guidelines aimed at supporting private and public providers of adult education in modularisation of the L97 /L97S curriculum was presented in 2002. These guidelines suggest methods for documentation and evaluation of skills acquired in working life and in the non-formal sector.

## **Adults in primary and lower secondary education**

In accordance with the CERI study focussing on adults with basic skills needs, the following figures first and foremost cover student participation in publicly approved and funded education, within the frame of the national curriculum for primary and lower secondary education.

Table 1 describes the participants in adult education, divided into two categories. One category gives the figures for ethnic Norwegian adults, and the other for immigrants in primary and lower secondary education. The figures cover the period 2002-2006. Table 1 shows a general increase in participants. Norwegian adults are the smallest group, and are slightly decreasing in numbers throughout the period studied. This applies to both men and women, and in general. As opposed to this the other group is increasing; in total for the whole period by as much as over 500 participants. Within this group women stand for the highest growth rate during the period, showing an increase of about 400 participants.

Table 1. Participants in primary and lower secondary education, §4A-1 per 1. October 2002-2005

|                                                                  | Men     |         |         |              | Women   |         |         |              | Total   |         |         |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
|                                                                  | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06      | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06      | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06      |
| <b>Adults in primary and lower secondary education</b>           | 589     | 738     | 653     | <b>488</b>   | 960     | 1,116   | 1,028   | <b>740</b>   | 1,549   | 1,854   | 1,681   | <b>1,228</b> |
| <b>Adult immigrants in primary and lower secondary education</b> | 1,003   | 1,110   | 1,251   | <b>1,389</b> | 1,134   | 1,244   | 1,539   | <b>1,746</b> | 2,137   | 2,354   | 2,790   | <b>3,135</b> |
| <b>Sum totalt</b>                                                | 1,592   | 1,848   | 1,904   | <b>1,877</b> | 2,094   | 2,360   | 2,567   | <b>2,486</b> | 3,686   | 4,208   | 4,471   | <b>4,363</b> |

Source: <http://www.wis.no/gsi/>

### Norwegian language and social studies courses for adult immigrants

Table 2 shows a total decrease in participants on courses in Norwegian language and social studies of about 6,000 over the period 2002-2006. One of the reasons for this decline is that in 2003 asylum seekers lost the opportunity to participate. Additionally, EU-citizens lost the right to education free of charge in 2004. The decrease in numbers may also be due to the fact that there is presently a low rate of unemployment in Norway. Table 2 also shows a general decline in male participants, while the numbers of female participants remains stable.

Table 2. Participants in Norwegian language and social studies courses for adult immigrants, per 1 October 2002-2006

|              | Men     |         |         |              | Women   |         |         |               | Total   |         |         |               |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
|              | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06      | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06       | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06       |
| <b>Total</b> | 14,572  | 12,021  | 10,086  | <b>9,257</b> | 15,861  | 17,296  | 15,647  | <b>14,857</b> | 30,433  | 29,317  | 25,733  | <b>24,114</b> |

Source: <http://www.wis.no/gsi/>

### Completion rates

Completion rates throughout the school system up to tertiary education can give an indication of the future requirements of adult education. The completion rate in compulsory education in the non-immigrant part of the population is 100 per cent. It is, however, important to note that completion does not necessarily mean that the student has obtained a passing grade in any or all subjects.

On the other hand, there are some first generation immigrants who have not completed primary and lower secondary education. In 2003, 20 per cent of the 18-year-olds first generation immigrants from non-western countries were neither enrolled in upper secondary education, nor were they registered as having completed their compulsory education. Some members of this group may nevertheless have completed lower secondary education in another country. This group of 18-year-olds consists mainly of young people who have resided in Norway for a very short time (Støren 2005).

There has been an overall increase in completion rates in upper secondary education. Opheim (2004) shows that the completion rates for the age group 25-29 years have increased from 77

per cent in 1982 to 90 per cent in 2002. Similarly, Opheim (2004) also shows that the completion rate for the age group 50-54 years has increased from 53 per cent in 1982 to 81 per cent in 2002. For both groups there are similar tendencies concerning socio-economic background. For the age group 25-29 years, about 82 per cent of those whose parents have no education beyond compulsory school had completed upper secondary education in 2002. For those whose parents have higher education, the completion rate was 95 per cent. For the age group 50-54 years, about 76 per cent of those whose parents have no education beyond compulsory school had completed upper secondary education in 2002. The completion rate was 98 per cent among those whose parents have higher education (Opheim 2004).

## Instructors and teachers

Teacher education is a complex field. The purpose of the various teacher education courses is to provide teachers for specific subjects, or specific types of education. However, teachers' competence overlaps in such a way that school owners are able to assemble teams of teachers according to the needs of the individual school. By structuring their studies or by taking further courses, teachers are able to extend the scope of their qualifications.

- Pre-school teacher education (3 years) qualifies for educational work in kindergartens and the first year of primary school. The addition of one year's relevant further education qualifies pre-school teachers for work from the first through the fourth year.
- General teacher education (4 years) qualifies for teaching in primary and lower secondary school, and in **adult education** at the corresponding levels<sup>4</sup>.
- Subject-specific teacher education (either 3 year or 4 years) qualifies for teaching of specific subjects in primary and lower secondary school, in upper secondary school and in **adult education. This education also certifies** candidates for other cultural work with children and adolescents.
- Vocational teacher education (3 years) qualifies for teaching in upper secondary school and **adult education. Candidates also qualify for teaching specific** subjects from the fifth year of primary school onwards.
- Teacher education programme (1 year) builds on a graduate course of academic studies or on a vocational training course with practical training and vocational theory, and qualifies for teaching from the fifth year of primary school, in upper secondary school and in **adult education.**
- Integrated master's degree (5 years) qualifies for the teaching of certain subjects from the fifth year of primary school, in upper secondary school and in adult education.<sup>5</sup>

As the overview of teacher education in Norway illustrates, adult education is integrated into the general teacher education, subject-specific teacher education, vocational teacher education and the one-year teacher education programme. However, there is no special study programme qualifying for adult education, and there are no formal qualification requirements for teachers in adult education.

[http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/235560/Rammeplan\\_laerer\\_eng.pdf](http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/235560/Rammeplan_laerer_eng.pdf)

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<sup>4</sup> Adult education has been marked in bold face to highlight which forms of teacher education include the aspects of adults in the national curriculum.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the teacher educations mentioned here, there is the Sami teacher education whose purpose it is to ensure the education of qualified personnel for kindergartens and schools in Sami areas. There is also teacher education for deaf students whose purpose it is to ensure the education of qualified teachers for deaf children and adolescents in kindergartens and schools. It includes the subjects Norwegian Sign Language and Norwegian for Deaf Pupils.



### *Facts and figures concerning teachers in adult education*

Seen together, tables 3 and 4 show that there are about 3,000 full time teacher positions in adult education, within the field of primary and secondary education, special needs education for adults, and Norwegian language and social studies for adult immigrants. Seen in relation to the total number of people involved in teaching and administration at management levels (approximately 8,000, table 5), there seems to be a high number of people in part time positions. This might reflect the situation of a wide range of providers of adult education in Norway. Adult education provided by local and regional authorities is to a great extent given by teachers in full time positions. On the other hand, adult education provided by e.g. independent study organisations mostly hire teachers in part time positions. This might indicate that there are many teachers in adult education who do this as a supplementary position and source of income. Another explanation might be that teachers within the field of adult education combine different part time positions provided by different educational institutions to one 100 per cent position.

Table 3. Registered full time positions in per cent in primary and lower secondary education and special education for adults in Norway, per 1 October 2005-06

|                                          | Full time positions in per cent |        |         |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|---------|
|                                          | Men                             | Women  | Total   |
| Headmaster/principal                     | 3,453                           | 3,528  | 6,981   |
| Vice principal                           | 2,259                           | 3,195  | 5,454   |
| School counsellor                        | 703                             | 1,589  | 2,292   |
| Teachers with approved qualifications    | 2,742                           | 63,952 | 91,494  |
| Teachers without approved qualifications | 1,442                           | 3,233  | 4,675   |
| Total                                    | 35,399                          | 75,497 | 110,896 |

Source: <http://www.wis.no/gsi/>

Table 4. Registered full time positions in per cent in Norwegian and social studies education for adult immigrants, per 1 October 2005-06

|                                     | Full time positions in per cent |         |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                     | Men                             | Women   | Total   |
| Headmaster/principal                | 4,137                           | 4,417   | 8,554   |
| Vice principal                      | 2,612                           | 4,793   | 7,405   |
| School counsellor                   | 939                             | 2,666   | 3,605   |
| Teachers with approved education    | 46,043                          | 122,670 | 168,713 |
| Teachers without approved education | 3,067                           | 5,726   | 8,793   |
| Total                               | 56,798                          | 140,272 | 197,070 |

Source: <http://www.wis.no/gsi/>

Table 5. The total number of registered persons working in primary and lower secondary education for adults, special education for adults and Norwegian and culture education for adult immigrants, per 1 October 2005-06

|                                                                                                                                                                                              | Total number of persons |       |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                              | Men                     | Women | Total |
| Total number of registered persons working in primary and lower secondary education for adults, special education for adults and Norwegian and social studies education for adult immigrants | 3,146                   | 4,873 | 8,019 |

Source: <http://www.wis.no/gsi/>

### **Gaps in provision**

“Overall, access to adult learning appears somewhat mixed. In principle the system appears to have a range of opportunities in place, especially for low skilled and disadvantaged adults.

These include the right to learning and financial support to do so, but in some parts of the country there may be practical obstacles, such as lack of supply, which may inhibit some people, especially older people from participating. For immigrants, there seems to be opportunities for Norwegian language training available, although we are not clear as to the availability of courses for all those who would require it” (Equity in Education Norway OECD 2005 [http://www.nifustep.no/norsk/publikasjoner/equity\\_in\\_education](http://www.nifustep.no/norsk/publikasjoner/equity_in_education) ).

## **Barriers to adult education**

The barriers to adult education can be many and of various kinds, depending on the different needs for adult education. Opheim (2004) has described four different types of barriers – institutional, economic, socio-cultural, and motivational. In Norway strong emphasis has been given to reducing institutional barriers against participation in adult and workplace learning. Among other measures, like opening up for access to higher education and upper secondary education based on documentation of non-formal competence, the previously mentioned Competence Building Programme (KUP-projects), is given as one important example. However, statistics indicate that the participants in the KUP-projects are adults who already have attained high levels of education. These are the ones who also seem to benefit the most from adult education. Opheim describes this as the “Matthew-effect” – the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It has been argued that measures to remove the barriers against workplace learning might well benefit employees; while those who are excluded from the labour market have no possibility to participate in these kinds of workplace-related projects.

One aim of the Competence Reform has been to reduce economic barriers to participation in adult education. It has been recognised that adults may have a need for more financial support in order to leave their work and engage in educational activities. The student support system has been changed, partly to make it easier to combine part time work and part time education.

Adults with immigrant backgrounds who have not completed primary and lower secondary education or upper secondary education may face both cultural and linguistic barriers to participating in the educational activities that they need. Also insufficient knowledge of the educational system can represent a barrier to entering this system. Crucial policy measures taken to meet this challenge are to increase the flow of information and reduce institutional as well as financial barriers to participation.

The fourth barrier mentioned by Opheim (2004) is considered particularly important. Adults who lack primary and secondary education may face a motivational barrier to re-entering the educational system. A majority of adults who participate in primary education have had negative experiences with the school system, which may explain why they never completed primary and secondary education in the first place. The experience of failing in the educational system before may discourage the re-entry. Motivational barriers could be the reason why some adults with little previous schooling are reluctant to re-enter the system, despite the government’s policy on minimising the structural and financial barriers. Research and experience show that the adults most in need of education are often the most reluctant to continue their education, due to negative school experiences earlier in life. Likewise, people with the poorest education are those who participate the least in workplace competence development. It has proved to be a challenge to motivate groups with little previous education to make use of various educational offers provided as a consequence of the Competence Reform.

## Assessment and policies/structures

According to the OECD study (2005) several key elements have been identified for the successful use of formative assessment in secondary schools:

- Teachers who use formative approaches have changed the culture of their classrooms, putting emphasis on helping students feel safe and be willing to take risks and make mistakes, and to develop self-confidence in the classroom.
- Teachers also make the learning process more transparent by establishing and communicating learning goals, tracking student progress and, in some cases, adjusting goals to better meet the needs of the student.
- To meet the wide range of student needs, teachers vary instruction methods.
- Teachers use a mix of approaches to assess student understanding of what has been taught.
- Teachers may provide verbal or written feedback in students' work. Teachers and researchers have found that the most effective feedback is timely, specific and tied to explicit criteria.

(Policy Brief November 2005 OECD)

It is important to be aware of the Norwegian educational tradition with respect to assessment. Historically there has been little focus on formally structured and organised assessment systems in general (especially in primary schools). There has not been a tradition for discussing systematic approaches to formative assessment at the primary and secondary levels. The Norwegian system has been practising summative assessment at the higher levels, but it seems we are just about to discover the needs for strengthening a systematically organised formative approach (much because of the results of PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS and ALL, including national results from evaluations of the former national curriculum). Formative assessment is a tool for giving emphasis to assessment *for* learning instead of assessment *of* learning. This is an issue of growing interest.

In higher education on the other hand, issues of formative assessment have been extensively debated. Due to the implementation of the Quality Reform there has been more focus on this in higher education. Whether this has actually led to a more formative approach to assessment still remains to be seen.

In vocational education and training, there have in recent years been carried out pilot projects on formative assessment by the use of portfolios, both in schools and in companies that train apprentices. A major objective of these pilot projects is to enhance the quality of learning, by emphasising learning processes and outcomes.

It could be argued that Norwegian teachers in general as well as in adult education have been using teaching methods and approaches to assessment that resemble the key elements of formative assessment, without discussing it or even being consciously aware of it. The previous curriculum emphasised teaching methods that relied on learning as a constant process of development, in which feedback is an important component. However, this has not been regarded as assessment, and the term formative is in many ways new and unfamiliar.

The intense activity in the area of compulsory education (new reform, new curriculum, and new national tests) and the stronger focus on assessment in general, with emphasis on the formative, leads to a search for concepts and definitions that are both practicable and acceptable to professionals as well as politicians.

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# **Annex I Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education (Education Act)**

Last amended 30 June 2000

<http://odin.dep.no/kd/english/doc/legislation/acts/014101-200002/dok-bn.html>

## **Chapter 4A. Education and training organized especially for adults**

### *Section 4A-1. The right to primary and lower secondary education for adults*

Persons above compulsory school age who require primary and lower secondary education have the right to such education unless they are already entitled to upper secondary education pursuant to section 3-1. The right to education normally includes the subjects required for the certificate of primary and lower secondary education for adults. Educational provisions shall be adapted to individual needs.

No charge shall be made for tuition or teaching materials.

### *Section 4A-2. The right to special education at primary and lower secondary level*

Adults who either do not or are unable to benefit satisfactorily from the ordinary educational provisions for adults have the right to special education.

Adults with a special need for training in order to develop or maintain basic skills have the right to such training.

For education pursuant to this section, section 5-1, third paragraph with the exception of the final sentence, and sections 5-3, 5-4, 5-5 and 5-6 shall apply accordingly.

### *Section 4A-3. The right to upper secondary education for adults*

Adults who have completed primary and lower secondary education or the equivalent but who have not completed upper secondary education have the right to take upper secondary education. The first sentence applies to adults born prior to 1. January 1978. Education for adults shall be adapted to individual needs. This right may, among other ways, be met by means of distance education facilities. The Ministry may issue further regulations concerning issues such as the question of who shall be entitled to this right, admissions, ranking and preferential rights.

Adults admitted to upper secondary education have the right to complete the full course. This applies even if they do not have the right to upper secondary education pursuant to the first paragraph.

In the case of subjects where the syllabus requires a period of instruction longer than three years, adults admitted to upper secondary education have the right to education in accordance with the period of instruction laid down in the subject syllabus.

No charge shall be made for tuition. The county authority may require adults attending upper secondary education to pay for the teaching materials and equipment normally required for their own use in connection with the course. The county authority may require payment to cover the cost of copying such materials. The Ministry may issue further regulations.

### *Section 4A-4. The duty of municipalities and county authorities to provide primary and secondary education for adults.*

Sections 13-1 to 13-3 shall apply to education provided pursuant to this chapter.

In fulfilling their duty to provide education for adults, municipalities and county authorities may use the services of adult education associations, distance education institutions and other institutions providing primary and secondary education.

Municipalities and county authorities are responsible for ensuring that adults receive certificates for education that they have completed.

Municipalities and county authorities shall make provisions to ensure that adults who receive education pursuant to this chapter are allowed to take an active part in efforts to foster a satisfactory learning environment and course provision.

The Ministry may issue further regulations concerning assessment, appeals against assessment, examinations and certificates.

*Section 4A-5 Required qualifications for teachers*

Section 10-1 and pursuant regulations shall apply accordingly to education provided pursuant to this chapter. Notwithstanding this, the Ministry may issue regulations permitting the appointment of teaching staff without formal pedagogical competence.

Section 10-1 and pursuant regulations shall not apply to education provided pursuant to the second paragraph of section 4A-2. However, such education shall be subject to professional and pedagogical guidance and responsibility.

*Section 4A-6. Course content*

Syllabuses pursuant to sections 1-3, 2-3, 3-4 and 6-4 apply with the adaptations provided for in this chapter

*Section 4A-7. School transport, etc.*

Adults who have not completed primary and lower secondary education and who live more than four kilometres from the school have the right to free school transport while attending primary and lower secondary education pursuant to this chapter.

Adults who need transport as a result of disabilities, sickness or injury have the right to free school transport regardless of distance while attending primary and lower secondary education pursuant to this chapter. Section 7-4 shall apply accordingly.

When daily transport pursuant to the first and second paragraph is not appropriate, the municipality shall provide lodgings for the adults. When necessary, section 7-1, fourth paragraph concerning supervision shall apply accordingly.

Otherwise, section 13-4 shall apply accordingly for the duties pursuant to this section.

*Section 4A-8. Counselling*

Adults with the right to education pursuant to sections 4A-1 and 4A-2 have the right to counselling to clarify what provisions they need.

*Section 4A-9. Exclusion from tuition*

When a pupil or participant persists in behaving in such a way as to seriously disturb working conditions and discipline at the school or seriously neglects his or her obligations, the municipality or county authority may exclude the pupil or participant from the remainder of the course to which he or she has been admitted. In connection with a decision concerning exclusion from tuition for the remainder of a course, the county authority may also decide that the pupil shall lose the right to upper secondary education pursuant to section 4A-3.

The municipality or county authority may not delegate to a school body the responsibility for deciding pursuant to this section that a pupil or participant shall be excluded from tuition or lose the right to education.

Before taking a decision concerning exclusion from tuition or loss of rights, an assessment shall be made as to whether it is possible to use other measures to help or discipline the pupil or participant.

*Section 4A-10. Supervision, control and appeals*

Sections 14-1, 15-1 first paragraph and 15-2 shall also apply for education provided pursuant to this chapter.

*Section 4A-11. Experimental activities*

Section 1-4 shall apply accordingly for education provided pursuant to this chapter.

## Annex II Aims and functions of a European Language Portfolio

The European Language Portfolio project has two main aims:

1. to motivate learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels;
2. to provide a record of the linguistic and cultural skills they have acquired (to be consulted, for example, when they are moving to a higher learning level or seeking employment at home or abroad).

Points 1 and 2 refer to the two basic functions of the European Language Portfolio:

The pedagogic function

Enhance the motivation of the learners

- to improve their ability to communicate in different languages
- to learn additional languages
- to seek new intercultural experiences

Incite and help learners to

- reflect their objectives, ways of learning and success in language learning
- plan their learning
- learn autonomously

Encourage learners to enhance their plurilingual and intercultural experience, for example through

- contacts and visits
- reading
- use of the media
- projects

b) The documentation and reporting function

The European Language Portfolio aims to document its holder's plurilingual language proficiency and experiences in other languages in a comprehensive, informative, transparent and reliable way. The instruments contained in the ELP help learners to take stock of the levels of competence they have reached in their learning of one or several foreign languages in order to enable them to inform others in a detailed and internationally comparable manner.

There are many occasions to present a Language Portfolio which is up to date, for example a transfer to another school, change to a higher educational sector, the beginning of a language course, a meeting with a career advisor, or an application for a new post. In these cases the ELP is addressed to persons who have a role in decisions which are important for the owner of the Language Portfolio. A learner may also be interested in having such documentation for him-/herself.

## **Annex III The Competence Reform**

The purpose of the Competence Reform has been to contribute towards meeting the needs for competence and skills in society, the workplace and on an individual basis. In 2000 the Education Act was amended to strengthen the rights of adults to supplementary education at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary level. New provisions were included, covering the assessment and formal recognition of non-formal competence based on practical experience. An adjustment of the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges in 2000 required institutions of higher education to assess applicants' practical competence as a part of the grounds for admission. Through the Act of the Working Environment, employees were given the right to leave of absence for education purposes, and expenses were made tax deductible. Negotiations between the employers' and employees' organisations have resulted in a better basis for the development of competence, through the establishing of funds and by their being agreed on the terms for leave of absence.

### **Reform measures**

- **Education for adults at primary and lower secondary school level**

This education must be adapted to suit the needs of individual adults. Primary and lower secondary education for adults is a municipal responsibility, but non-governmental study associations, distance learning institutions and other bodies also play a role in the provision of education. When a project was launched to chart the need for primary and lower secondary education, and to develop teaching models appropriate for adults, 37 municipalities from all over Norway took part. (Final report from the national project "Registration of the need for and the organisation of primary and lower secondary education for adults", 2002)

- **Upper secondary education for adults**

The Storting (the Norwegian parliament) has decided that adults shall have an individual right to upper secondary education. This provision applies to adults born before 1978 who were not included in the "Reform 94" in upper secondary education, and who had not previously completed upper secondary education. This Act was implemented in August 2000, and took effect as of 1 January, 2001.

- **Documentation of non-formal learning**

From 2003 adults were given the right to have their practice and practical experience – their non-formal competence – assessed, documented and included as an integral part of their formal upper secondary education. At the same time, an amendment was made to the Higher Education Act, granting adults the right to be considered for admission to institutions of higher education on the basis of their practical competence. A three-year Non-Formal Learning Project (1999-2002) was established, targeting all adults who wished to have their non-formal competence assessed in relation to the educational system, working life and organisational activity. Adult immigrants who wished to have their competence documented and assessed through vocational tests were also included in the target group. A system for the documentation of non-formal competence has now been established, drawing on the experience gained from the Non-Formal Learning Project and the introduction of non-formal learning assessment in higher education.

- **Right to leave of absence**

The Storting has granted employees the right to study leave. The Act was implemented January 1, 2001.

- **Funding**

As of the autumn of 2000, regulations concerning the funding of education have been altered in order to adapt them better to adults' needs for competence building.

- **The Competence Building Programme**

An important component in the Competence Reform was the development of educational opportunities that exploit the huge potential of the workplace as a place of learning. Joint projects between the workplace and the providers of education were launched in order to plan for systematic competence building.



## **Annex IV Formative assessment in Norway**

*-by Per Lauvås, professor of Teaching and Learning at Østfold University College*

In Norwegian education, formal assessment systems (that is to say, summative assessment) have been restricted to the lower secondary level and upwards. In primary education, no formal assessment system has so far existed. The assessment system in secondary education is twofold, with (a) some, but not many, examinations in the form of final tests (neither nationwide nor local) and (b) extensive use of continuous assessment where a broad spectrum of methods are being applied, few of which are formalized or regulated to any degree.

In Norwegian education, the distinction between summative and formative assessment only recently appeared in legislation, rules and regulations, curricula, instructions or guides. So, neither legislation nor general concerns of teachers have accommodated any balancing of the two assessment forms. Instead, continuous assessment tends to dominate and contributes to reducing assessment to just the summative form. It seems to be the hope that it is possible to combine formative and summative assessment without harm to any of them, possibly also to mutual benefits. It is an open question whether this is a viable strategy or whether formative assessment in fact is being choked this way.

Higher education in Norway has not ever been utilising continuous assessment to any degree, only examinations in the form of final tests due to a general, legal requirement to use external assessors at all examinations and at all elements of examinations. At this educational level, a distinct division has thereby been drawn between a formative assessment phase related to the teaching/learning process and a final phase of summative assessment. However, even in this setup, it has not necessarily been the case that formative assessment has been thriving, in particular not at the undergraduate level. Partly this has been due to prohibiting student/staff-ratios and partly because of academic traditions not to be too much school-like and thereby make too many efforts to 'help' the students to meet the demands and requirements. In recent reforms (NOU 2000, St.meld. nr. 27 (2001-2002)), a general trend is to strengthen formative assessment, not at the expense of summative assessment but rather to supplement it. At the same time, the mandatory use of external assessors has been lifted which has rapidly, it seems, reduced the previous difference between secondary and higher education as to the balancing of formative and summative (continuous) assessment. But even at the tertiary level, there has been no reference to the terms 'formative' and 'summative assessment', only to terms like 'feedback' and equivalents.

To sum up, in Norwegian education, there has not been established a clear distinction – neither at the semantic level nor as regards recommendations on assessment practices – between formative and summative assessment, although policy papers on recent reforms in higher education are almost pivoted around an ambition to strengthen formative assessment. At all educational levels, however, assessment practices are to a large extent concentrated on summative assessment, whether in the form of final tests or various schemes of continuous assessment. Implicitly, the underlying idea is that it is not only possible, but also viable and effective, to combine the two forms of assessment.

## Annex V Five levels of difficulty - ALL survey

[http://www.uis.no/COMMON/WEBCENTER/files.nsf/Lookup/89-603-XWE-part1-/\\$file/89-603-XWE-part1-.pdf](http://www.uis.no/COMMON/WEBCENTER/files.nsf/Lookup/89-603-XWE-part1-/$file/89-603-XWE-part1-.pdf)

### Five levels of difficulty for the prose, document and numeracy domains

|                              | Prose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Document                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Numeracy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level 1<br/>(0-225)</b>   | Most of the tasks in this level require the respondent to read relatively short text to locate a single piece of information which is identical to or synonymous with the information given in the question or directive. If plausible but incorrect information is present in the text, it tends not to be located near the correct information.                                                                                                                                                                                                | Tasks in this level tend to require the respondent either to locate a piece of information based on a literal match or to enter information from personal knowledge onto a document. Little, if any, distracting information is present.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Tasks in this level require the respondent to show an understanding of basic numerical ideas by completing simple tasks in concrete, familiar contexts where the mathematical content is explicit with little text. Tasks consist of simple, one-step operations such as counting, sorting dates, performing simple arithmetic operations or understanding common and simple percents such as 50%.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Level 2<br/>(226-275)</b> | Some tasks in this level require respondents to locate a single piece of information in the text; however, several distractors or plausible but incorrect pieces of information may be present, or low-level inferences may be required. Other tasks require the respondent to integrate two or more pieces of information or to compare and contrast easily identifiable information based on a criterion provided in the question or directive.                                                                                                | Tasks in this level are more varied than those in Level 1. Some require the respondents to match a single piece of information; however, several distractors may be present, or the match may require low-level inferences. Tasks in this level may also ask the respondent to cycle through information in a document or to integrate information from various parts of a document.                                                                                            | Tasks in this level are fairly simple and relate to identifying and understanding basic mathematical concepts embedded in a range of familiar contexts where the mathematical content is quite explicit and visual with few distractors. Tasks tend to include one-step or two-step processes and estimations involving whole numbers, benchmark percents and fractions, interpreting simple graphical or spatial representations, and performing simple measurements.                                                              |
| <b>Level 3<br/>(276-325)</b> | Tasks in this level tend to require respondents to make literal or synonymous matches between the text and information given in the task, or to make matches that require low-level inferences. Other tasks ask respondents to integrate information from dense or lengthy text that contains no organizational aids such as headings. Respondents may also be asked to generate a response based on information that can be easily identified in the text. Distracting information is present, but is not located near the correct information. | Some tasks in this level require the respondent to integrate multiple pieces of information from one or more documents. Others ask respondents to cycle through rather complex tables or graphs which contain information that is irrelevant or inappropriate to the task.                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Tasks in this level require the respondent to demonstrate understanding of mathematical information represented in a range of different forms, such as in numbers, symbols, maps, graphs, texts, and drawings. Skills required involve number and spatial sense, knowledge of mathematical patterns and relationships and the ability to interpret proportions, data and statistics embedded in relatively simple texts where there may be distractors. Tasks commonly involve undertaking a number of processes to solve problems. |
| <b>Level 4<br/>(326-375)</b> | These tasks require respondents to perform multiple-feature matches and to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy passages. More complex inferences are needed to perform successfully. Conditional information is frequently present in tasks at this level and must be taken into consideration by the respondent.                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Tasks in this level, like those at the previous levels, ask respondents to perform multiple-feature matches, cycle through documents, and integrate information; however, they require a greater degree of inferencing. Many of these tasks require respondents to provide numerous responses but do not designate how many responses are needed. Conditional information is also present in the document tasks at this level and must be taken into account by the respondent. | Tasks at this level require respondents to understand a broad range of mathematical information of a more abstract nature represented in diverse ways, including in texts of increasing complexity or in unfamiliar contexts. These tasks involve undertaking multiple steps to find solutions to problems and require more complex reasoning and interpretation skills, including comprehending and working with proportions and formulas or offering explanations for answers.                                                    |
| <b>Level 5<br/>(376-500)</b> | Some tasks in this level require the respondent to search for information in dense text which contains a number of plausible distractors. Others ask respondents to make high-level inferences or use specialized background knowledge. Some tasks ask respondents to contrast complex information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Tasks in this level require the respondent to search through complex displays that contain multiple distractors, to make high-level text-based inferences, and to use specialized knowledge.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Tasks in this level require respondents to understand complex representations and abstract and formal mathematical and statistical ideas, possibly embedded in complex texts. Respondents may have to integrate multiple types of mathematical information, draw inferences, or generate mathematical justification for answers.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## **Annex VI NGOs - the third way**

*by The Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (NAAL)*

Various study organisations have been important providers of adult education in Norway over the last hundred years, in addition to the regular public and private providers. The courses that are offered rest on notions of enlightenment, equality, and democracy.

Today there are 19 adult learning associations, comprising 435 nationwide adult learning NGOs. They offer 47,000 courses with a total of 633,000 participants, 55 % of which are women.

As a result of the Norwegian Adult Education Act, adult education organised by approved associations receive grants from the Government, most of the counties and many municipalities, through a legal system of criteria.

The adult learning associations represent a multitude of interests and ideologies. The largest associations offer a broad range of topics on several levels, with or without formal exams and parallel programs in the official school system. Other associations emphasise more voluntary adult learning activities, such as organisational training of members or learning for the development of the local community and sustainable development. Others emphasise political training, or culture and creative, aesthetic and practical topics.

### **Challenges**

Despite the huge number of courses and participants, and despite the fact that there is a recognised need for many of the courses, the study associations and their members have been witnessing a steady decline in government grants. One reason is that the organisations have a system for and are used to reporting on activity, rather than results. The Ministry is now requesting evidence of results as well, and because of the structure of the organisations it is a challenging task to develop a new reporting system as quickly as requested.

Study associations are active in essentially six competence areas:

**Work place learning.** Study associations are active providers of education in local workplaces all over the country. These include language courses, computer courses, leadership training, and training in confident decision-making.

### **Basic skills**

Literacy skills, computer skills, and language training have been and still are relevant topics, as defined on the basis of local community needs, the needs of private individuals and of the trade and industry sector. The AOF, the Workers' Educational Association, have for example developed special methods for developing literacy skills.

### **Integration and equality**

The study group is the basic unit in the study associations. The participants meet on an equal basis, with a view to sharing and developing knowledge together – often on the basis of local needs. The study group has now also been developed as a tool for integration. Many study associations offer training adapted for the disabled, and one study association; the Association for Adapted Adult Education in Norway, has the disabled as a special target group.

### **Democracy and engagement**

A major objective of the study associations is to preserve and develop democracy. Their goal is to make education and learning available to everyone – regardless of gender, ethnicity, level of functionality, or where they live. Among other things, the study associations offer training in the implementation of democracy in voluntary organisations, such as arranging activities and creating engagement at the local community level.

### **Culture and tradition**

Study associations are engaged in strengthening culture and tradition, by the provision of courses and training in ancient craft techniques, and how to strengthen local culture. This is one of the largest activity areas.

### **School subjects**

Study associations have made a special effort to make public education available to all. Over the years they have developed decentralised courses, in collaboration with universities, colleges and county administration, and built up a high level of competence and an effective infrastructure to run such an enterprise.