

Producing the European adult learning glossary

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Measures for implementing the action plan for adult education: study on European terminology in adult learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector

The objectives of the project were to produce:

- a report on data already being gathered on the adult learning sector across Europe, with draft proposals for monitoring the sector for the Commission to consider putting to the Council of Ministers
- a glossary of terms to support the discussions of those proposals

The glossary

2 levels:

- a handbook containing the most essential terms (one per page) in alphabetical order in English, with definitions in English & translations into the other 27 official languages of the 33 EU and associated states
- a much longer list of terms for specialists

The languages

Bulgarian (Cyrillic)

Croatian

Czech

Danish

Dutch

English

Estonian

Finnish

French

German

Greek (Greek)

Hungarian

Icelandic

Irish

Italian

Latvian

Lithuanian

Macedonian (Cyrillic)

Maltese

Norwegian

Polish

Portuguese

Romanian

Slovakian

Slovenian

Spanish

Swedish

Turkish

The language groups

Baltic: Latvian, Lithuanian

Celtic: Irish

Germanic: Danish, Dutch, English, German, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish

Hellenic: Greek

Romance: French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish

Slavic: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Macedonian, Polish, Romanian, Slovakian, Slovenian,

Non-Indo-European: Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Maltese, Turkish

Entries

67 terms

in

28 languages

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1876 entries

(36 missing, so 98% complete)

Problems, 1

Adult:

Any person aged 16 years or older who has left the initial education and training system

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Any person aged 16 years or older who has left the initial education and training system

(Note: This is a pragmatic definition for EU purposes, based on the fact that 16 is the age of majority in some EU countries, e.g. Scotland, and that international surveys of adult literacy and numeracy tend to cover the age-range 16 to 60, 64 or 65)

Problems, 2

Literacy

The ability to read and write

(Note: This is the basic meaning; the definition excludes the wider uses in English which can include oracy (speaking and listening skills) and numeracy; it also excludes the modern use of 'literacy' in English to mean 'capability', as in 'financial literacy', 'emotional literacy', etc.)

Literacy

‘In Spanish there is no translation of the word “literacy” to collect all its breadth. The term is most often equated with “alfabetización” but “literacy” is often used.’

Problems, 3

Adult learning teacher: A person who is acknowledged as having the status of a teacher of adult learners according to the legislation and/or practice of a given country;

Adult learning trainer: A person who works with adult learners to impart practical knowledge or skills, and whose expertise has been acquired through experience and not necessarily through formal qualifications.

In Croatia no special qualification is required for teaching adults. There is a single qualification for teachers and they can teach children and adults... [and] As far as I know there is no such [category as Adult learning trainer] in Croatia.

In the end, I chose to translate [adult learning trainer] with 'ufaglært yrkesfaglærer', which you might translate as something like 'not accredited vocational teacher'. But this term is a construction, as we, as far as I know, do not have vocational teachers, i.e. at the upper secondary level, without at least some education at higher level here in Norway.

‘Folkbildning’

English: ‘Liberal adult education’

Slovenian: ‘Prosvetljevanje’

'Mother tongue'

Most translations meant, literally, 'mother tongue'

Bulgarian: роден език

Polish: język ojczysty

Maltese: l-ilsien nattiv / l-ilsien matern / l-ilsien omm

On a convent wall in Malta:

Sliem alik, Maria, omm alla

Problems in Malaysia

Language is always emotive!