

ADULT
LEARNER
PUBLICATIONS
2011

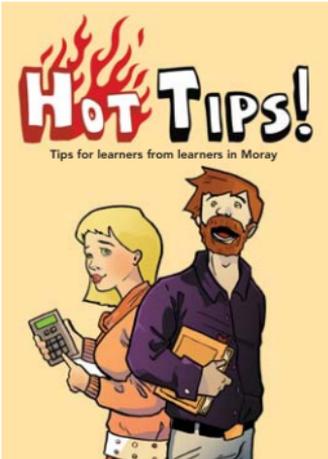
"I HAVE MORE READING SKILLS
THAN I THOUGHT I HAD."

These brief notes accompany the seven publications of our 2011 Adult Learner Publications projects. All the books, booklets, pamphlets – call them what you will – were produced by groups of literacy learners from around Scotland. Each has a theme and the groups worked to their own brief, some more loosely than others. The intention was that they should be as creative as possible, should let their ideas run away with them.

The publications are designed, primarily, to inspire and engage other learners, whether by talking about issues that are universal, or by telling stories about the lives of the participants. They are about sharing ideas, stories, words, not only through prose and poetry, but also through pictures, photographs, graffiti.

Our aim was to emphasise the pleasure in writing and learning, in communication, and in working together to speak to a wider community.

HOT TIPS



Hot Tips was created by learners in Moray who, in the process of their learning, had discovered ways of helping themselves. This could mean accessing the right tools and aids to learning, or simply finding ways to remember things. Some people keep notebooks to record helpful facts. Moray learners decided to share these with each other and learners across Scotland.

One way to create publication like this would be to establish a learners' editorial group. Perhaps they could talk to others about their learning experience and ask questions:

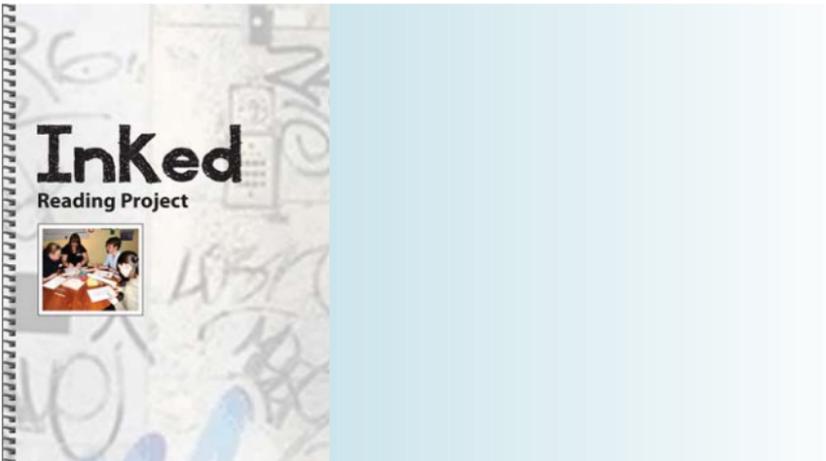
- What problems did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
- Did different people have similar experiences?
- Do they have shortcuts or solutions they would like to share?

You could create an extensive resource of your own using hints, tips and advice devised by learners as they progress.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING:

Encourage your learners to create their own 'Hot Tip'. Find something that is difficult to remember and try to work out a way to fix it in your mind. This may be through a mnemonic in the form of a rhyme, a visual association or an acronym.

INKED READING PROJECT



The *Inked Reading Project* offered workshop sessions looking at tattoos, graffiti, labels and logos. It aimed to help learners explore knowledge they already possessed and to talk about what reading meant in their daily lives.

"We can and do read information around us all the time!"

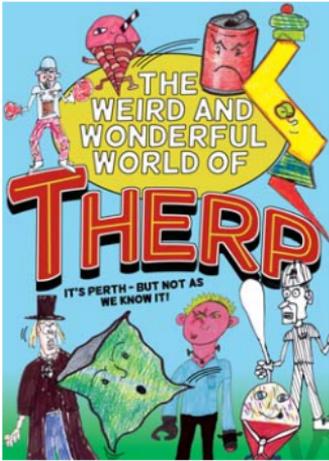
The sessions focused on creativity, on learners producing their own logos, tags and designs, while giving room for discussion on what constitutes literacy. The aim is to work with what you already have, what you already know rather than seeing literacy as an insurmountable monolith.

"I have more reading skills than I thought I had."

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING:

Look for words in everyday life, in the built environment or in labelling that you know and recognise, particularly difficult words. A learner who was also a boxer knew how to spell amateur, which is a very difficult word for most people. Context can help us all punch above our weight. Learners often know more words than they give themselves credit for.

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORLD OF THERP



This project in Perth sought to engage young people by combining photography and drawing with storytelling to produce stories in an accessible form. The original concept was to find out the learners' likes and dislikes about Perth in order to produce a picture of the town that would be familiar across Scotland. What was actually created was altogether more fanciful.

The photographs were taken first, giving a location, then the drawings produced a series of characters to populate it. The stories came last. This has more in common with creative writing techniques than with project work. The aim is to stimulate the imagination.

The use of humour and fantasy produces something quite strange. It helps to look at things differently, to break the rules a little.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING:

Ask your learners to invent their own characters or superheroes or use ones they know from television or film. Make up stories about what happens when the characters go out into the place you live. It doesn't matter how absurd they are – in fact the more absurd the better.

AN APPLE A DAY



The learners on this project were altogether more systematic in their approach to creating a publication. The core group formed an editorial board who decided on a subject for the book and, as well as producing their own stories, they put out a call for submissions from other groups of learners.

"Everybody did their bit."

Although anxious at the scale of the task before them these learners supported each other and discovered hidden talents. Producing the words is only part of the learning process. One of the learners had experience of design and was able to advise on the layout. In fact, making editorial decisions was soon seen as part of the creative process.

"Trust yourself as much as other people trust you."

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING:

Looking for humour in serious subjects can make them seem less daunting, and easier to write about. Think of amusing stories with your learners. It may be something that has happened to them, has happened to someone they know or is an old joke that they've heard many times.

MAKE IT HEARD



The men in Glenochil prison come from a wide variety of backgrounds. The aim of this project was to see how their voices differed. There was a focus on the use of non-standard English in the telling of their stories.

This is not only the case in prisons. Listen to how learners speak and tell stories. In many cases people who claim they cannot write a story will be habitual storytellers. Try transcribing or taking down a tale in note form. How is it expressed? What words are particular to the learner?

Get them to tell stories about where they are from or where they have been.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING:

Dialect and accents give rise to words that are not in common use elsewhere and these words can be special to you. They don't have to be national or regional; they can be family words, baby talk that sticks, or slang and code used by peer groups. Do your learners have any words that are special to them and how are they spelt?

COMMUNAL SPIRIT



POETRY FROM
ESKDALE HOUSE



Communal Spirit was created as part of a larger arts project. The men involved took part in quite intensive sessions involving reminiscence and discussion of their lives. The poetry in the book grew organically from these sessions.

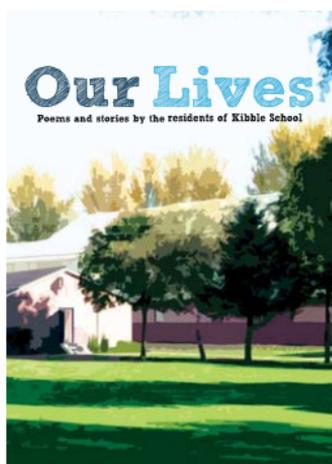
Often in a creative context the editing of work is as important as the initial setting down of words. Using poetry rather than prose as the vehicle for telling stories allows concentration on small incidents.

When learners have something on paper you can look at examples of other people's poetry. Look at how it is laid out: Does it rhyme? Are the lines long or short? How does this affect the way you read the poem out loud? Does changing the look of the poem make it work in a different way?

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING:

The cover of this book looks like an eye test chart. In some of the poems capital letters are used to show someone shouting; it looks like shouting. See what happens when you experiment with the placing of words on the page, use white space as silence, change the font. Experiment.

OUR LIVES



The young men resident in Kibble School are acutely aware of how the outside world sees them. In collecting these writings together the aim was to give a glimpse of different facets of their personalities.

They watch films, read books, play sports and music, have pets, holidays and ambitions, and they write and create art. The aim here was for the learners to show themselves in a positive light, and in so doing perhaps to see themselves in the same way.

"...people should not stereotype us..."

Again, in this publication, care was taken to preserve the voices of the learners. They use slang and write as they speak. It is possible to make yourself understood without always following the rules of grammar. Look at how your learners speak and see how this affects their stories when they are set on the page.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING:

The writers of this book wanted to show the world a different side of themselves, things that people wouldn't expect from offenders. Is there something that your learners would like to tell others about themselves? Do they have ambitions or talents or interests that might surprise people who don't know them.

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