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# **Online training and development for those who work with adult migrants with little or no home language schooling<sup>1</sup>**

**Martha Young-Scholten and Rola Naeb**

## **Abstract**

This chapter introduces EU-Speak, an Erasmus+ funded three-phase project that created and delivered six on-line modules in five languages to address the insufficiency of teacher training and continued professional development for those who work with adult migrants with little or no home language literacy. Registration data and questionnaire responses indicate that the idea of supra-national, multi-lingual provision was both feasible and attractive and open-ended questions point to an impact on participants' teaching. The EU-Speak modules are now published as a volume in the five languages and can be accessed for free on our website <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/eu-speak/>.

750 million adults worldwide have little or no literacy due to poor access to formal schooling. Some migrate to highly literate societies and are expected to learn to read and write, for the first time, but in a new language. Research from the 1970s onwards shows that migrants can reach high levels of second language oral proficiency regardless of age, education and type of exposure (Hawkins 2001), and that when migrants learn to read for the first time as adults, they follow a development route similar to children (Young-Scholten and Strom 2006; Young-Scholten and Naeb 2010; Kurvers *et al.* 2010). However, the majority struggle to develop literacy skills beyond A1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (Condelli *et al.* 2003; Kurvers *et al.* 2010; Schellekens 2011; Tarone *et al.* 2009). The potential of migrants we refer to as LESLLA<sup>2</sup> learners compels us to search for what contributes to their failure to reach higher levels of attainment. Their chances of success are

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<sup>2</sup> The acronym LESLLA comes from an organization devoted to these learners: Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults. See [www.leslla.org](http://www.leslla.org)

significantly increased when they are taught by well-trained teachers (Condelli *et al.* 2010; see also Paget and Stevenson 2014; Schellekens 2011). However, in most post-industrialized countries in which these adults resettle, there is insufficient teacher training and continued professional development specifically addressing the complex situation of these migrants. Some countries rely heavily on volunteer tutors. Neither they nor part-time and full-time teachers, have access to specific training and continued professional development (henceforth T&CPD). This should provide detailed information about practitioners’ learners’ current situations, cultural, linguistic and educational background; the processes involved in their acquisition of linguistic competence and development of reading; and the pedagogical approaches, methods, techniques and materials appropriate for these adult learners (Johnson 2006). The statistics in Table 9.1 attest to this (Young-Scholten *et al.* 2015). The figures come from one of the questions in a survey conducted in 2014 to which 137 practitioners responded. It revealed how little LESLLA-specific training and continued professional development those working with these learners receive. The mean amount of T&CPD for the question ‘training in the last year’ was around eleven hours and training in the last five years was over three times that. But note there was considerable individual variation, with large standard deviations. However, the most common answer – that is, the mode – was zero hours of training or professional development for both the previous year and in the five years. This is worrying for practitioners who face considerable challenges in their teaching and tutoring.

Table 9.1. Hours of LESLLA training and continued professional development

	Training/professional development in the last year	Training/professional development in the last five years
Mean	10.61	30.91
Median	0	6.00
Mode	0	0
Std deviation	28.35	50.79

Governments have poor track records of allocating resources for adult basic skills education and specialist T&CPD despite overwhelming evidence of the high cost of insufficient oral and literacy skills in the language of the community. Insufficient oral and literacy skills correlate with dependence on interpreters and on social services and are barriers to a living wage, a secure environment, good health and societal participation (Bynner and Parsons 2009;

Coulombe *et al.* 2004; Cree *et al.* 2011; Dustmann and Fabbri 2003; Jacobs *et al.* 2014; Sum *et al.* 2004). With respect to T&CPD, in the UK, for example, as immigration has increased, not only has access to free classes declined but requirements for specialist teaching qualifications for working with adult learners have also been weakened.

<sup>3</sup> The solution that the EU-Speak project sought to test has involved by-passing national politics and offering online training and continued professional development at the supra-national level. Offering it for free further ensures that it is accessible to the volunteer tutors who have less access to any T&CPD. Such an initiative is feasible for two reasons. First, most low-educated adult migrants in post-industrialized countries hail from the same set of currently conflict-torn and/or impoverished countries such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East (Syria) and Central Asia (Afghanistan). Second, because the learners in the population under consideration are beginning-level adults beyond the age of compulsory schooling, and since most of these learners would not have received secondary schooling, the variations in a given host country's secondary school curriculum and system of vocational and academic qualifications are not relevant and differences do not need to be taken into consideration. Moreover, there are no established or required qualifications aimed at working with this population of learners in most countries, with the exception of fairly recent efforts in Scandinavia and the USA (e.g. Franker and Christensen 2013; Vinogradov 2013). This ~~suggests means~~—that supra-national T&CPD could be a viable alternative to transcendent regardless of political, educational, cultural, linguistic and orthographic differences across countries of resettlement. The question we ask here is whether this is indeed an option attractive to LESLLA practitioners.

In the following, we present the workings of three inter-related lifelong learning projects the first of which began in 2010. Answers to whether this supra-national online T&CPD is attractive to practitioners, not only waged full and part-time but also unwaged volunteers, involves looking at module participant questionnaire data collected during the delivery of six online modules<sup>4</sup> between 2015 and 2018 and considering whether participants' practice changed as a result of taking a module. This also involved looking at how the modules' international international and multilingual discussion forum functioned. We close by considering the potential of this T&CPD to make an impact on the attainment of the low-

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example:

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7905#fullreport>

<https://feweek.co.uk/2018/03/26/esol-is-chronically-underfunded-this-must-change/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/14/uk-learn-english-free-classes-government-funding>

<sup>4</sup> Or 'course' in North America and elsewhere.

literate adults with whom these practitioners work.

### **Multi-country provision of training and continued professional development**

The three-phase project, European Speakers of Other Languages: Teaching Adult Migrants and Training their Teachers (EU Speak) began in 2010 with EU Lifelong Learning Grundtvig funding. This first phase explored a range of aspects of basic language and literacy skills provision involved in these migrant adults' chances of educational success. This included curriculum, method, technique, materials, testing and assessment, teacher training and continued professional development. Participating in this phase of the project were six EU countries with different languages, orthographies, cultures, systems of education, provision and policy.<sup>5</sup> The exploration of these topics in a series of workshops in each country led to narrowing the focus to training and continued professional development. A second Grundtvig-funded project with five EU countries and the USA then laid the foundations for specialist T&CPD.<sup>6</sup> This entailed conducting several international surveys of [a range of practitioners and experts](#) to establish a common set of knowledge and skills relevant to working with this learner population and then to confirm the need for and absence of opportunities for practitioners [including waged full- and part-time and unwaged volunteers](#) - to gain these (Young-Scholten *et al.* 2015). The set of knowledge and skills was mapped onto a curriculum with six self-standing modules which would be offered for free to anyone working with adult migrants with little literacy and/or formal schooling anywhere in the world. This then led to the design and piloting of a module on vocabulary learning. Versions were created not only in English but also in four additional languages (Dutch, German, Finnish and Spanish) unlike the typical monolingual MOOC.<sup>7</sup> The decision to offer modules in several languages was based on awareness that because practitioners usually teach the language of their own country, they may lack the high level of proficiency in English required to participate in an academic module.

### **Piloting a Vocabulary Learning module**

In countries (including the UK) where some specialist T&CPD is available for practitioners,

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<sup>5</sup> Institutions involved were Newcastle University; Workers Education Association; VUC Fyn (Denmark); Universities of Amsterdam, Cologne, Granada, Leipzig, Stockholm. Project ref: 2010-1-GB2-GRU06-03528 2.

<sup>6</sup> Institutions involved in the second step were: Newcastle University; Universities of Amsterdam, Cologne, Granada, Jyväskylä; in the USA: Virginia Commonwealth University, American Institutes for Research, Center for Applied Linguistics. Project ref: 539478-LLP-1-2013-UK-GRUNDTVIG-GMP.

<sup>7</sup> The EU-Speak modules loosely fit under the category of Massive Online Open Courses but registration is restricted to those who work with adult migrants with little or no formal schooling or literacy.

at most it usually involves an introduction to working with this population and focuses on practical skills. The project team therefore decided to focus the pilot module on a more specialized topic which the aforementioned surveys indicated would be of value to practitioners but was rarely covered in any of the T&CPD in which they said they had participated. Vocabulary was one of a number of topics that fell into this category. That the module topic would be of value to practitioners was underscored by evidence from a longitudinal study by the Finnish project partner that a small vocabulary erects obstacles even when the orthography is as highly transparent as that of Finnish (see Tammelin-Laine and Martin 2015). The module pilot also allowed exploration of how practitioners would respond to a module containing a good amount of theory. An important part of the module drew on the module designer's expertise on 'fast mapping'. This process accounts for our ability to quickly learn new words. While young children learn most words through fast mapping, adults can fast map, too. We do so when we hear an unknown word in context, and after hearing it only a few times we automatically and subconsciously map the word onto a meaning, e.g. 'Here's the *selfie* I took with the Queen'.

For delivery of the module in late winter 2014, there were fifty-one registered participants from Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, the UK and the USA. Using open source Moodle as a platform, the text and activities for the module were in five language versions: Dutch, English, Finnish, German and Spanish. The text presented a summary of findings from vocabulary learning research including on learner strategies and teaching techniques. Activities encouraged action research and were fivefold as follows: with others in that language version, module participants shared on the module discussion forum information about their teaching context, their learners' backgrounds, their learners' vocabulary strategies, their teaching of vocabulary and their application of new ideas from the module to their teaching. A mentor supported the discussion forum in each language; these were postgraduate students in each country recruited to assist the project.

Questionnaires in which participants evaluated the module showed positive responses to learning about fast mapping and other ideas assumed to be unfamiliar to participants, such as cognitive load, and these responses indicated that participants were interested in finding out more about concepts with which they were unfamiliar. They also expressed enthusiasm about the chance to share similar experiences with those from other regions and countries; this sharing was by far most active in the English discussion forum among participants from both English- and non-English-speaking countries. Irrespective of the length or the depth of their teaching experience, participants felt that the module contributed to their professional

development. Among the negatives was the lack of interaction across the discussion forums in the five languages and the challenge of module mentors to keep up with a very active discussion forum (which resulted in a database of over 35,000 words). The pilot confirmed assumptions about feasibility and met the project's expectations that participants would react positively to a module whose focus was primarily on relevant research.

### **The six modules**

In the third phase of the project, the EU-Speak partners designed the six modules listed below and collaborated on their delivery in five languages. The Netherlands withdrew as a partner (due to retirement) and Turkey stepped in. The order in which the modules are shown here is the order in which they were delivered, based on project partners' availability for designing them (partners' universities are shown in parentheses). This order does not represent a logical sequence; that is, the modules are self-standing.

*Working with LESLLA Learners* (Virginia Commonwealth University)

*Bilingualism and Multilingualism* (Boğaziçi University)

*Language and Literacy in their Social Contexts* (Jyväskylä University)

*Reading Development from a Psycholinguistic Perspective* (University of Granada)

*Vocabulary Acquisition* (University of Cologne)

*The Acquisition and Assessment of Morphosyntax* (Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria)

From 2015 to 2018, each module was delivered twice, with the second delivery a refinement of the module in response to participant questionnaires and to module mentors' observations of participant reactions and interaction during its delivery. The six modules will continue to be offered from 2019 onwards, via the LESLLA organization. We now turn to practitioner response to the modules.

### **Teacher training and continued professional development in online delivery**

Over the past decade, online education has emerged as a viable means of accumulating knowledge and gaining and honing skills in a wide range of fields. For online as opposed to face-to-face T&CPD, there are two important additional factors: participant uptake and completion. Both are particularly relevant when the course/module is open access and free. While the latter two characteristics remove the obstacles of accessibility and cost, uptake and

completion are highly variable and influenced by factors that traditional face-to-face delivery is not. A study by Banegas and Busleiman (2014) is relevant here. They investigated what led trainee teachers to enrol in and then complete an online initial English language teacher education program. Questionnaire and interview data showed that the main reasons for enrolling were convenience but also obtaining a formal qualification. Influences on completion were more complex and included course status, face-to-face interaction, collaborative learning, ‘future selves’, motivation, participants’ perceptions of the course materials, perception of the online platform and perception of their own performance. The EU-Speak modules were not credit-bearing, i.e. they did not count towards any qualifications. However, participants did receive certificates of completion which in some countries were used for renewing their teaching licences, and in several instances, the modules were able to substitute for modules on established programmes.

### Overall uptake of EU-Speak modules

As mentioned earlier, one of the aims of the project was to cater not only to waged full- and part-time teachers, but to the many unwaged volunteer tutors who work with migrant adults with little or no formal education and home language literacy. These volunteers, because of their status, may not have any relevant training and typically lack opportunities for continued professional development. Employment status data collected on participants’ registration forms indicates that this aim was met, as shown in Table 9.2.

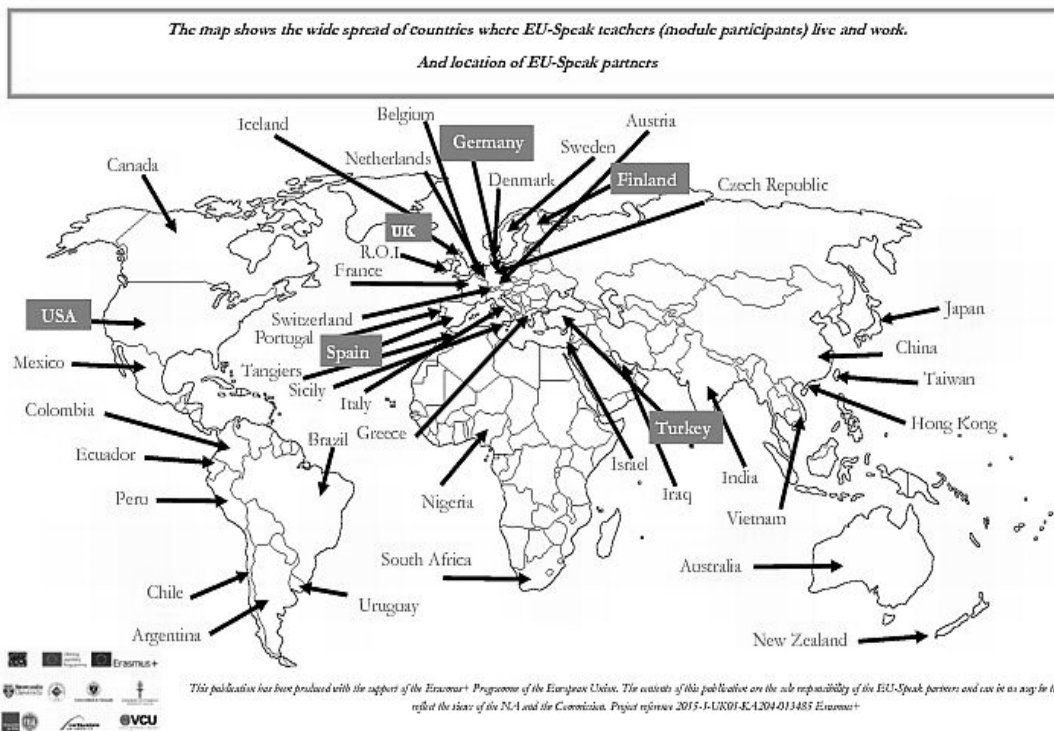
Table 9.2. Participants’ employment status

Waged	Volunteer	Other
Full time: 336	Full time: 10	In training/student: 21
Part time: 312	Part time: 178	Self-employed: 2
	Not stated: 22	Did not declare: 115

Nearly 1,000 individuals registered to take the modules. The widespread attractiveness of this specialist supra-national T&CPD is indicated by participants having come from the forty countries shown in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 Participants in modules





Participants were asked about their reasons for joining the module. The responses varied from professional development to self-interest, to better understanding of the learners or the teaching context. For example, responding to a question about their main reason for taking that module:

To learn other skills and techniques in tutoring ESL adult students.

To get a better understanding of learners which will be helpful in order to cater to their needs.

The set of responses below reveals varying backgrounds, and indicates that even those with a history of academic teaching or study or substantial experience teaching adult learners or those who are programme directors were attracted to the modules' focus on supporting and teaching low-literate adults.

I have over ten years of experience helping low literacy adults who were Canadian born but very little experience with individuals from other countries. I am hoping I can get a better understanding of these individuals and their needs. I want to do what is best for my students.

I teach students who have a low level of education and I witness their struggle learning a second language. I try my best and seeing students' progress in hugely rewarding. I feel I could help these students more, therefore I am hoping the course will make me more innovative in my approach and methodology.

I am always interested in improving my instructional practice and have recently become more and more interested in the factors that influence language acquisition outside of instructional best practices such as affective filters, education level, and literacy in a student's first language.

I would like to learn more about the kind of challenges that language teachers face when teaching adults who are not literate in their L1. I would welcome the chance to teach such adults in the future.

I often work in isolation and no longer have access to adult learning CPD (as I'm self-employed). This is a great opportunity to consolidate and extend my knowledge.

I come from a very academic environment with highly educated learners. This is a new world I am entering, and I love it.

I always want to learn more about how to support the learners. I am the ESOL curriculum lead and it is important that I learn of new ways to support other tutor and to develop our curriculum.

### **Post-module questionnaire results**

In a seminal study, Peterson and Clark (1978) used questionnaires and other techniques to measure a range of possible contributors to the effectiveness of training and professional development. (On measurement of T&CPD effectiveness, see also Borg 2006; Busch 2010; Chen 2005; Grossman 1995; Guskey 2002; Kennedy 1987; Kourieos 2014; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Webster *et al.* 2012; Yang 2012.) When they finished one of the EU-Speak modules, participants were asked to complete a feedback questionnaire in the language of the module. This allowed us to collect information about patterns of access and views about various aspects of the module such as duration, organization and clarity of objectives. The first set of questions focused on patterns of access, the second set focused on the content and resources and the final set focused on distance learning as a tool for training and professional development.

One of the questions asked the participants about module duration. Week-by-week content was released on the same day every week for six weeks. Once all content had been released, participants had access to the content for all weeks for a week after the end of the module (so the seventh week). More than 85 per cent responded positively that the duration suited them. Participants were also asked about their views on and familiarity with distance learning in general, and specifically, as a mode of study to enhance their knowledge and skills. The questionnaire also aimed to determine whether participants' responses about distance learning were related to their lack of skills in relation to learning in a distance mode. Around 75 per cent of the participants confirmed that they were comfortable with distance learning before they started the module and 75 per cent of respondents (strongly) agreed that distance learning is a good way to enhance their knowledge and skills regarding LESLLA learners.

Taking into account the demands on their time that paid and volunteer ESOL teachers in the UK and elsewhere face, it is not surprising to discover that they value this mode of study.

The questions then turned to the modules themselves. Participants were asked to comment on whether the organisation of the modules was logical and the objectives were clear. These were two separate questions, and they responded positively to both. They were also asked about the content of the module in terms of the readings used in a given module and the resources available and/or referred to (such as publications which usually could not be made directly available due to copyright). The question asked whether these deepened and expanded their knowledge of the topic. Most respondents had (strong) positive views on the readings (71 per cent) and on the resources (62 per cent).

Another important aim of the EU-Speak project, [mentioned at the start of this chapter](#), was to use the discussion forum to create an international [and multi-lingual](#) community of practice among tutors and teachers who rarely have the chance to interact. After trialling single-language discussion forums, it was decided that this community of practice could be better supported if each module had a single, multi-lingual discussion forum rather than one for each language. This is in line with Banegas and Busleiman's (2014) discovery during a course they observed that participants' initial motivation shifted from extrinsic to intrinsic when they realised the value of what they were learning, which often occurs in a collaborative context. Echoing Kennedy's (1987) and Chen's (2005) findings regarding the positive role of collaborative learning in face-to-face T&CPD are Cullen *et al.* (2013) who confirm the value to online course participants of providing collaborative space and who point out that use of wiki postings shows that collaboration and learning require additional means of incentivizing and maintaining levels of collaboration. That the discussion forum met these criteria is evidenced by responses to the two questionnaire items soliciting participants' views about the international forum. 88 per cent agreed that accessing the forum was easy and 92 per cent found the international forum helpful for sharing ideas with those from other countries. These comments provide further support.

It is always great to learn what other teachers are doing to enhance teaching and learning.

I got some insight into the different learners other teachers are dealing with. I was able to read what other teachers thought about the information in the modules.

New points of view, especially because I teach a transparent language, Finnish, and other participants were also teaching opaque languages, for instance English. So the perspectives, the experiences from different people teaching different "kind of languages" can just bring a great and useful experience to me and a lot of new ideas in teaching.

Additional screen shot extracts of comments on the forum are shown in Figure 9.2 below. These rich qualitative data, now anonymized, reveal that practitioners readily identify commonalities as they begin to form a community.

Figure 9.2. Sharing on the international, multi-lingual discussion forum

The screenshot shows a forum thread with five posts. Each post includes a user profile picture, a title, the user's name, the date and time, the main text of the post, and a 'Read the rest of this topic' link. At the bottom right of each post are links for 'Permalink', 'Edit', 'Delete', and 'Discuss this topic'.

**Post 1:**  
Hi from Holland  
by [redacted] Wednesday, 15 February 2017, 4:50 PM  
My name is Hanna, I am fond of reading and learned a lot from it. Now teaching at a Dutch language institute and missing good reads for adult (immigrant) learners of the Dutch language. Hope to get inspired by and to contribute to the course, to understand the how and why. Nice to join all of you!  
[Permalink](#) | [Edit](#) | [Delete](#)  
[Discuss this topic](#) (0 replies so far)

**Post 2:**  
Hello from Florida  
by [redacted] Wednesday, 15 February 2017, 3:40 AM  
Hello fellow LESLLA Instructors and Tutors  
I work as an adjunct ESL instructor at a college in Florida. I also volunteer to teach English to adult immigrants from Latin America at a non-profit organization for over 2 years in Florida. Some of my Mexican students are of indigenous origin ...  
[Read the rest of this topic](#) (182 words)  
[Permalink](#) | [Edit](#) | [Delete](#)  
[Discuss this topic](#) (0 replies so far)

**Post 3:**  
Hola a todos  
by [redacted] Monday, 13 February 2017, 4:00 PM  
Me incorporo con cierto retraso pero confio en ponerme al día.  
Me llamo Sandra y vivo en Madrid. Soy profesora de Español para Extranjero en una escuela universitaria de negocios.  
Trabajo con estudiantes Erasmus y con otros procedentes de convenios con universidades de Pekín. En este último caso ...  
[Read the rest of this topic](#) (109 words)  
[Permalink](#) | [Edit](#) | [Delete](#)  
[Discuss this topic](#) (1 reply so far)

**Post 4:**  
Hola from Davis, CA  
by [redacted] Monday, 13 February 2017, 6:34 AM  
Hi all! I'm Emily, and like Lisa (who's also posted here, and who told me about this module!), I'm also a PhD student at UC Davis. I'm here to learn more about LESLLA students and hear from teachers on their experiences teaching this population, as my dissertation is on a local community literacy...  
[Read the rest of this topic](#) (160 words)  
[Permalink](#) | [Edit](#) | [Delete](#)  
[Discuss this topic](#) (1 reply so far)

**Post 5:**  
Hello from Bristol  
by [redacted] Friday, 10 February 2017, 12:56 PM  
Hello everyone  
Please excuse the slightly late introduction! I'm Olga and have been teaching ESOL for 15 years and mainly work with pre-entry and entry 1 learners (beginner learners) from all walks of life with different backgrounds. I am looking forward to working through the module and sharing ideas with you all.

## Effectiveness

Assessing the effectiveness of teacher training and continued professional development on practitioners' classroom or tutoring practice is a challenge, and measuring its effectiveness when provision is online is a considerably greater one. One must rely on answers provided in questionnaires rather than on classroom observation, and then one must cope with the sort of low response rate connected with online surveys. The final set of questions in each questionnaire focused on initial and direct impact on the participants themselves and indirect impact on the participants' learners, as reported by the participants. More than 77.6 per cent of them reported that participating in the module would help them in their practice with learners, and around 78 per cent said that they had improved their knowledge about literacy education through the modules.

In eliciting feedback from module participants, while questionnaires might not fully capture the dynamic interplay among beliefs, knowledge and classroom practice (Borg 2006) the EU-Speak project trialed a simple means of measuring participants' knowledge in the form of a pre- and post-module quiz. The first question on the five-item pre- and post-module quiz (available in all five project languages) related to the description of students with whom teachers were assumed to be actively working. The example we provide below is from the module *Working with LESLLA Learners*. Sixty participants took the pre-module quiz and forty-four (and no German speakers) took the post-module quiz.<sup>8</sup> The two tables below show responses to one question for the different language versions. All participants seem to know that responses 4, 5 and 6 are not possible answers and these choices are therefore not listed in the leftmost column. Response number 1, chosen by 75 per cent of the 60 module participants, is the correct answer. Those who took the module in English (not broken down by country here) are the most confused by what the term 'preliterate' means (learners whose home language is not written).

*Ziaur is from Bangladesh. He speaks Bengali but never had access to schooling in his native country. Would he be considered:*

1. **Nonliterate** X
2. Preliterate
3. Semiliterate
4. Nonalphabet literate
5. Non-Roman alphabet literate
6. Roman alphabet literate
7. I don't know.

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<sup>8</sup> There were no Turkish participants on the first module due in large part to the unstable situation regarding migrants' ultimate resettlement intentions at the time.

Table 9.3 Pre-test results

	Total (N=60)		English (N=28)		Finnish (N=8)		Spanish (N=15)		German (N=9)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	45	75.0	18	64.3	6	75.0	14	93.3	7	77.8
2	7	11.7	5	17.9	0	0	1	6.7	1	11.1
3	3	5.0	1	3.6	1	12.5	0	0	1	11.1
7	5	8.3	4	14.3	1	12.5	0	0	0	0

Table 9.4 Post-test results

	Total (N=44)		English (N=25)		Finnish (N=4)		Spanish (N=15)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	26	59.1	13	52.0	4	100	9	60
2	2	4.5	2	8.0	0	0	0	0
3	1	2.3	1	4.0	0	0	0	0
7	15	34.1	9	36.0	0	0	6	40

What is striking is that the participants on the English version of the module and on the Spanish version who also took the post-module quiz seem to have become less confident and more often chose 'I don't know'. Although we cannot be sure, this can be seen as evidence of learning in that participants have started to realise that the topic is more complex than they assumed prior to taking the module. In other words, it is evidence of the dynamic process referred to by Borg (2006).

In the module-final questionnaire, Participants were also asked to list some of the changes they expected to make as a result of taking the module. Below are some comments from the *Reading Development from a Psycholinguistic perspective* module:

For me, it was more changes in thinking: issues I hadn't encountered or thought about yet. I am finding working with preliterate people very, very challenging--and equally as rewarding.

Realizations about how difficult some things (like mixing writing systems, and different models for learning) can be, will help me better prepare for the individual needs of learners with whom I work.

Participants also noted new activities they intended to undertake and materials they intended to use:

I will try to incorporate some of the very practical ideas/class plans.

Concentrating more on phoneme awareness.

More phonological awareness activities.

Adding more grapheme/phoneme exercises.

More critical literacy activities.

More voluntary free reading in the class.

Introducing more reading time for my low-level students.

Providing additional support for cultural questions.

Finding simple texts at the appropriate levels to engage emerging readers.

Providing differentiated readings on the same topic, when available.

Most importantly, more than 90 per cent of participants in all the modules said that they would share what they have learnt and the resources with other colleagues.

## **Conclusion**

The data confirm our assumption that supra-national delivery of teacher training and continued professional development is feasible for those who work with adult migrants who have little or no formal education or home language literacy. The data also show that this sort of provision and these sorts of modules are attractive to practitioners. There is considerable scope for investigation (and options for doing so) of the changes practitioners at the point of pre-service training and during subsequent continued professional development undergo. However, within the context of the 2015-2018 EU-Speak project, it was only possible to scratch the surface. We expect information on the effectiveness of the modules to be shared with us informally in due course, given the tight international community of practice slowly emerging among those worldwide who work with migrant adults with little or no education.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The EU-Speak modules are now published as a volume in the five languages and can be accessed for free from our website <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/eu-speak/> accessed 9 January 2019.

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