

Literaltäts-
Entwicklung von
Arbeitskräften

Verbundprojekt
Workforce Literacy Development

Universität Bremen
Fachbereich 12

aap

wisoak
Wirtschafts- und Sozialakademie
der Universität und Fachhochschule

vhs
Volkshochschule

bfw
Unternehmen für Bildung

alphabund
Allgemeine
Deutschsprachige
Alphabetenverbände
gestützt von
Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

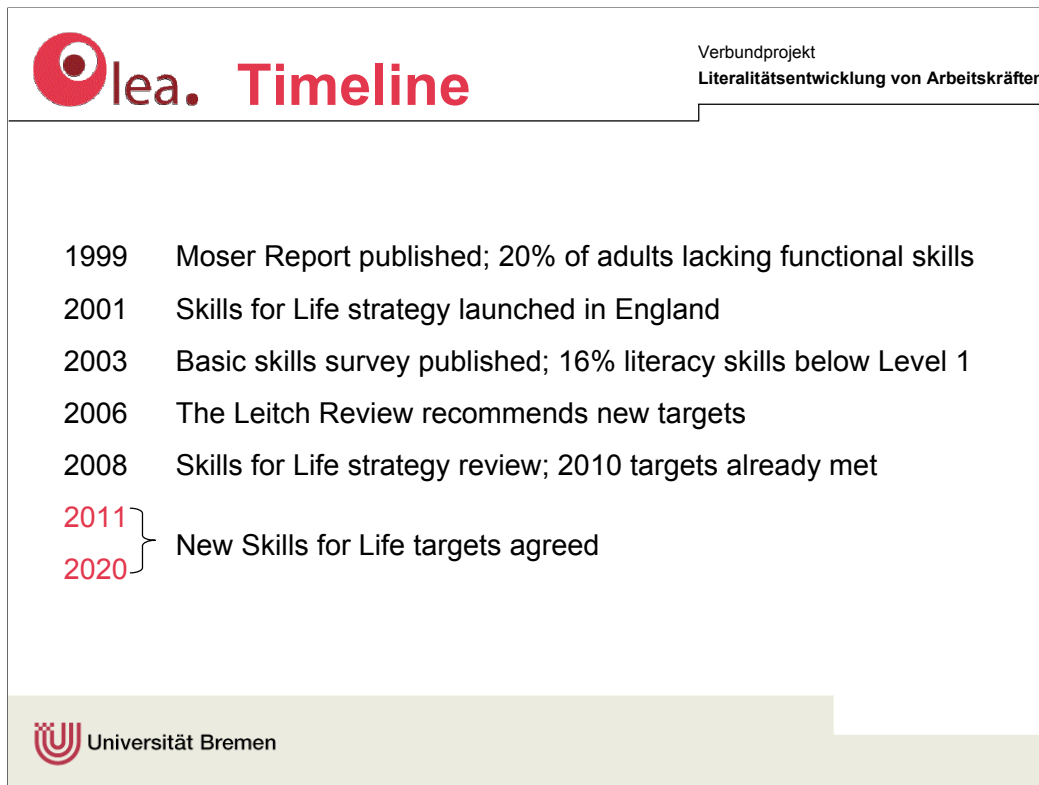
**Skills For Life Strategy –
Adult Literacy in England**

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This presentation gives an overview of the Skills for Life strategy in England. The slides are structured as follows:

- Slide 2: Details the most important Skills for Life strategy events and reports
- Slide 3: Shows the basic skills survey results as published in 2003
- Slide 4: Compares the levels used in the 2003 survey to the IALS levels
- Slide 5: Gives an overview of Skills for Life providers in the UK
- Slide 6: Illustrates details about further education colleges
- Slide 7: Depicts UK government spending distribution since 2000/01
- Slide 8: Shows the preliminary Skills for Life results in 2008
- Slide 9: Reports new targets set for 2011 and 2020
- Slide 10: Gives an outlook on planned changes for basic skills set tests
- Slides 11/12: List useful links and cited sources



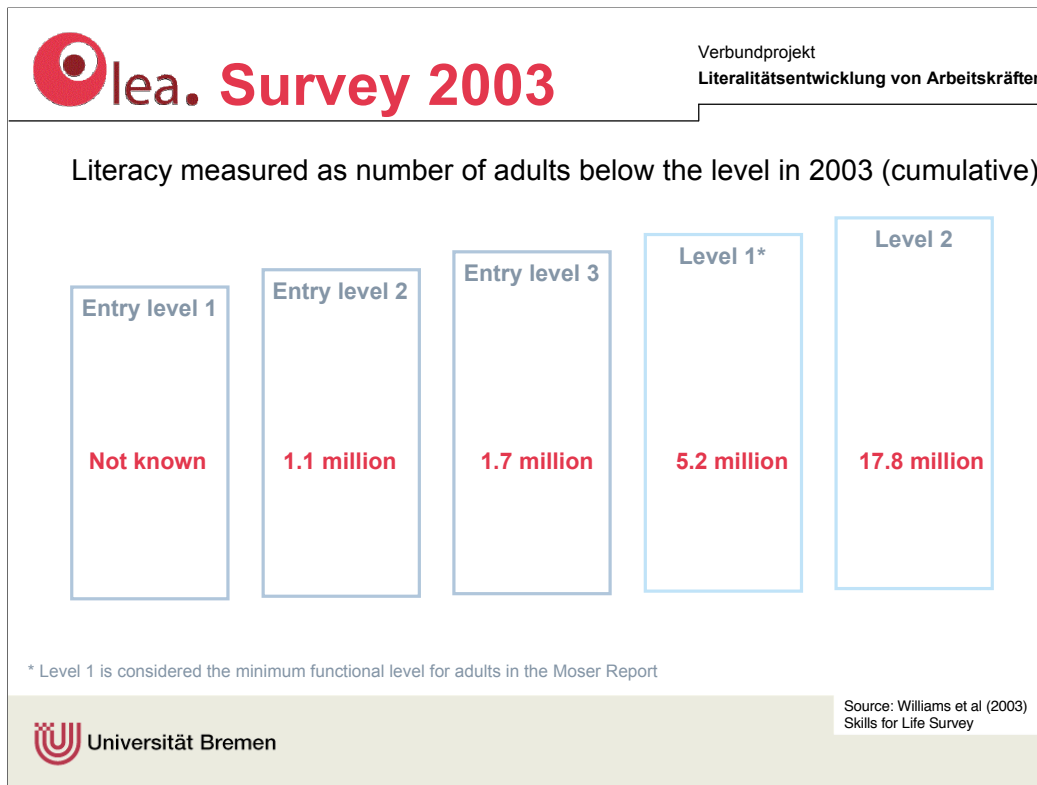
Skills for Life is the national strategy in England for improving adult literacy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and numeracy skills.

In 2001, the then Department for Education and Skills launched the Skills for Life strategy, as a response to Sir Claus Moser’s 1999 report “A Fresh Start”. Sir Claus Moser, a social statistician and then Chairman of the Basic Skills Agency identified a vast basic skills problem in England with 20% of adults lacking functional basic skills in his report (DfEE, 1999).

In 2003, a nationwide survey of basic skills in the UK was published. The survey, in which 8,730 adults aged 16-65 in England were tested, showed that 5.2 million (16%) have literacy skills below Level 1.

In 2006, the Leitch Review commissioned by the UK government indicated the next likely Skills for Life targets. The Review recommends that the UK commit to becoming a world leader in skills with an ambitious set of basic skills objectives.

In 2008, the Skills for Life strategy was reviewed after the early achievement of objectives and new targets were agreed in line with the Leitch Report recommendations for 2011 and 2020.




Let's begin with a bit more detail on the survey results in 2003:

The research commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills found that 17.8 million adults (56 per cent of the adult population of working age) in England had literacy skills below Level 2, the level of a good pass at GCSE (comparable to below „Mittlerer Reife“ in Germany).

The research also suggested that 5.2 million people lacked functional literacy and 6.8 million people lacked functional numeracy.


According to Moser's benchmarks for functional literacy and numeracy, the level needed to get by in life and at work are broadly equivalent to Level 1 for literacy and Entry Level 3 for numeracy. The UK government used these as the benchmarks for functional literacy and numeracy. Thus, 5.2 million people in England lacked functional literacy skills to get by in life and at work in 2003.



Verbundprojekt
Literalitätsentwicklung von Arbeitskräften

An adult classified at this (UK) level...	... has these reading skills
Level 2 or above (= IALS Level 3 or above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands a range of texts of varying complexity accurately and independently ▪ Can obtain information of varying length and detail from different sources
Level 1 (= IALS Level 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands short straightforward texts of varying length on a variety of topics accurately and independently ▪ Can obtain information from different sources
Entry level 3 (Entry level as a whole = IALS Level 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands short straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently ▪ Can obtain information from everyday sources
Entry level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands short straightforward texts on familiar topics ▪ Can obtain information from short documents, familiar sources and signs and symbols
Entry level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understands short texts with repeated language patterns on familiar topics ▪ Can obtain information from common signs and symbols

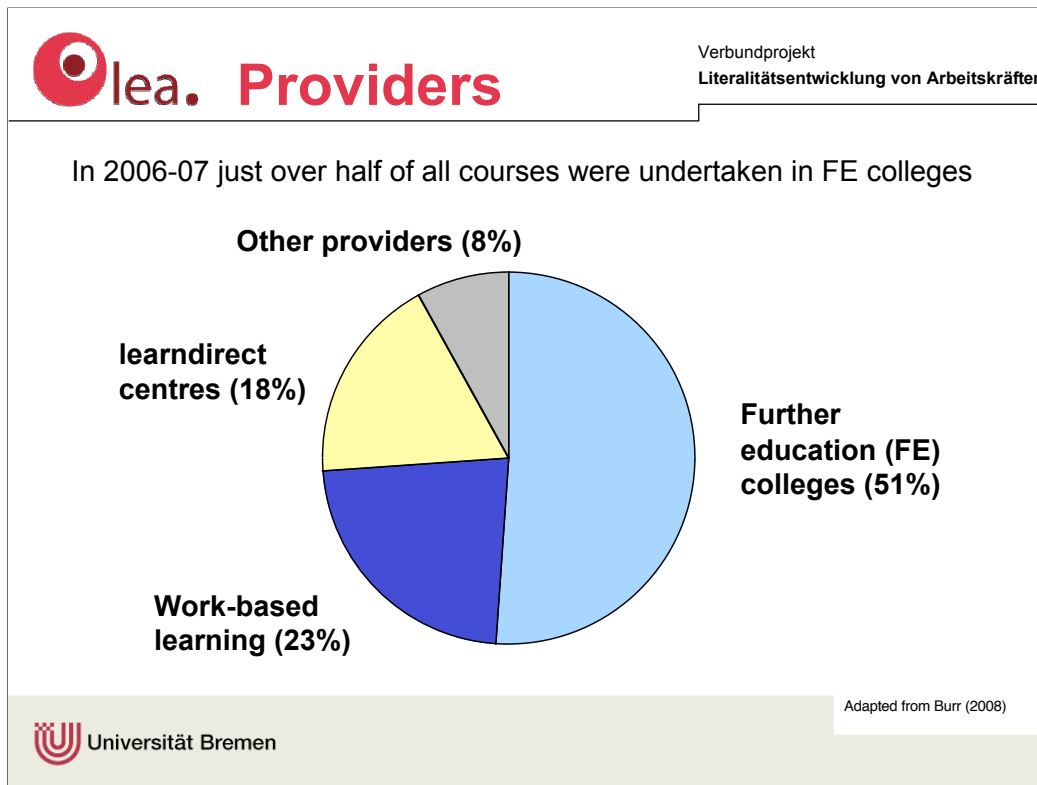
IALS = International Adult Literacy Survey



Source: Brooks (2009) and Williams et al (2003)

Whilst the grouping and naming of levels varies from country to country, this table gives a description of the various literacy levels used in the Skills for Life survey (2003) in comparison to the levels used in 1996/97 at the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS).

More information on how the two sets were matched can be found in Brooks et al (2001) "Progress in Adult Literacy", pp. 121-122 (pages 135-136 of the pdf document).



A wide range of learning providers are funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). They include local colleges, private sector training providers, voluntary and community groups, local adult and community education services and learndirect centres. Many learners will be able to choose the type of learning they take up, and when and where they can do it.

Between the launch of the strategy in 2001 and July 2004 approximately 80% of courses were delivered in further education colleges and the Committee of Public Accounts recommended increasing the diversity of providers. The Department for Skills and Education (DfES) has made progress in implementing this recommendation. Since 2004, the proportion of courses delivered by further education colleges has decreased as an increasing proportion of courses are delivered in work-based learning, adult and community learning, offender learning and by learndirect and 'Train to Gain' providers. In 2006-07, just over half of all courses were directly delivered by further education colleges.

For example, learndirect, a not-for-profit organisation created in 1998 to take forward the UK Government's stated vision of a UK University for Industry, delivered around 450,000 Skills for Life courses for over 100,000 learners in 2006-07.

lea. FE Colleges Verbundprojekt
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There are 360 Further Education (FE) colleges in the UK providing education and training for 16-18 year old school leavers and adults

Source: Various FE College websites

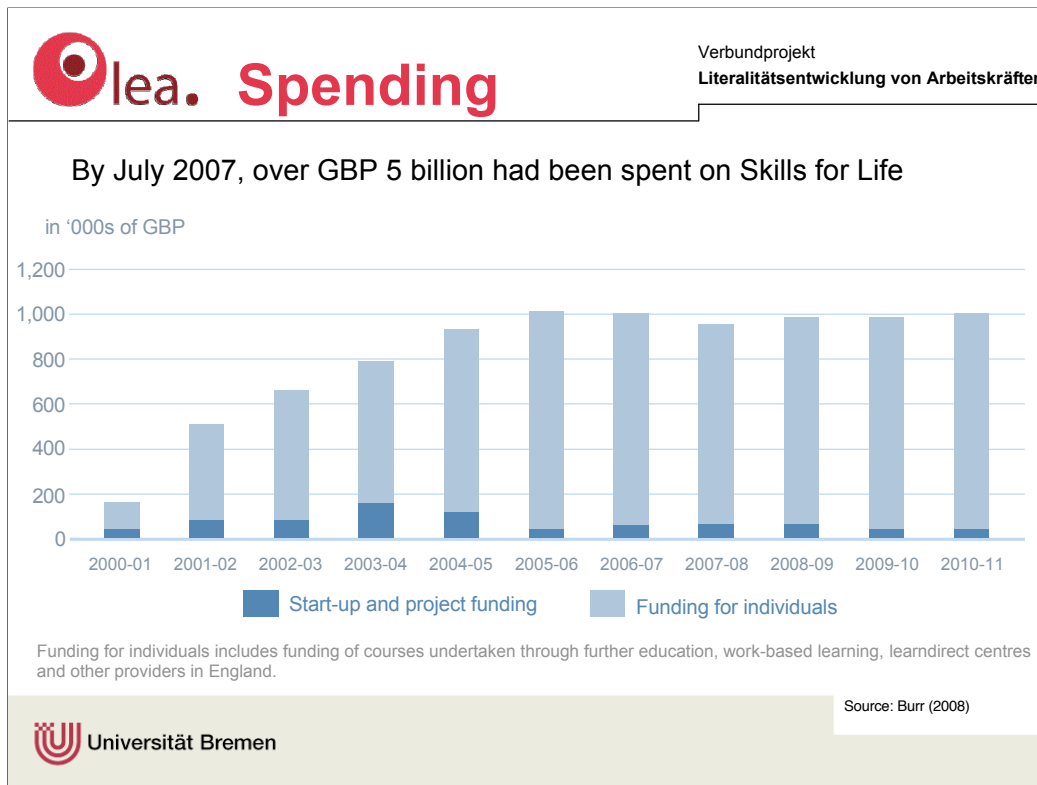
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There are more than 400 Further Education (FE) colleges in England alone, not counting the rest of the UK. Considering only those in England, more than 50% are general FE colleges, about a quarter are sixth form colleges (leading up to A-levels that are comparable to the German “Abitur”), and the rest are specialist colleges of one sort or another, e.g. agricultural, catering, performing arts, or providing education for people with various disabilities.

The general FE colleges provide education and training after the normal school leaving age of 16. The courses offered at FE colleges are below university degree level and tend to be high on job-relevant content. Most of the students who go to college are local school leavers. About 40% of school leavers will go on to college to study a practical and skills-based subject, leading to a qualification that will get them a good job, or simply to study academic subjects often in preparation for attending university to get a degree. However, colleges also run courses for people who are already in work and want to improve their qualifications, and for adults who are looking for a change in career or who want to return to study after a break.

The general FE colleges are also the major providers of adult basic skills courses. For work-based training they may be directly under contract to employers or to prisons and the probation service.

Nationally, local FE colleges train more than 3.5 million people every year. Half of all vocational qualifications - more than 800,000 in 2005/06 - are awarded via colleges. 235,000 college students are aged over 60.

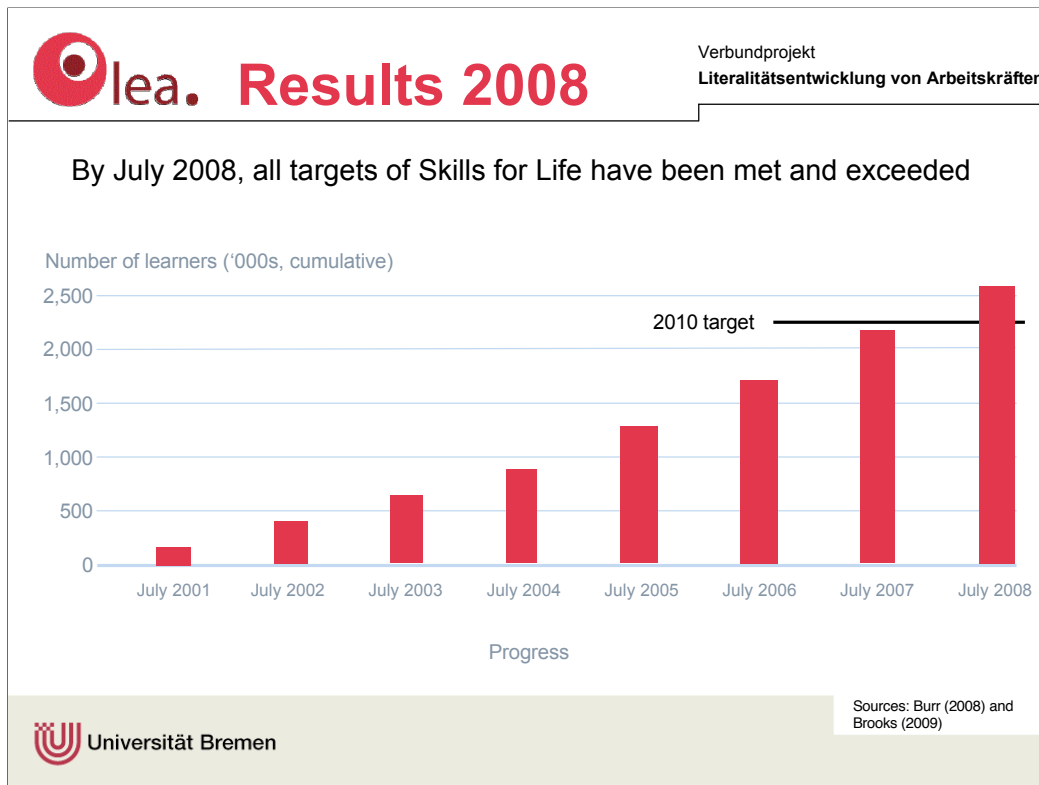


The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has spent at least £5.0 billion on adult literacy, language and numeracy skills since the strategy began in 2001. Over the period 2007-08 to 2010-11, planned expenditure is £3.9 billion (Burr, 2008).

Most of this expenditure (88%) provides funding for individuals and employees to undertake courses in further education colleges, adult and community education centres, learndirect centres, prisons and probation offices – the majority of which are funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The remaining 12% has been spent on start-up and project funding, for example on developing teaching materials. The above chart shows the distribution of actual and planned expenditure for Skills for Life since 2000/01.

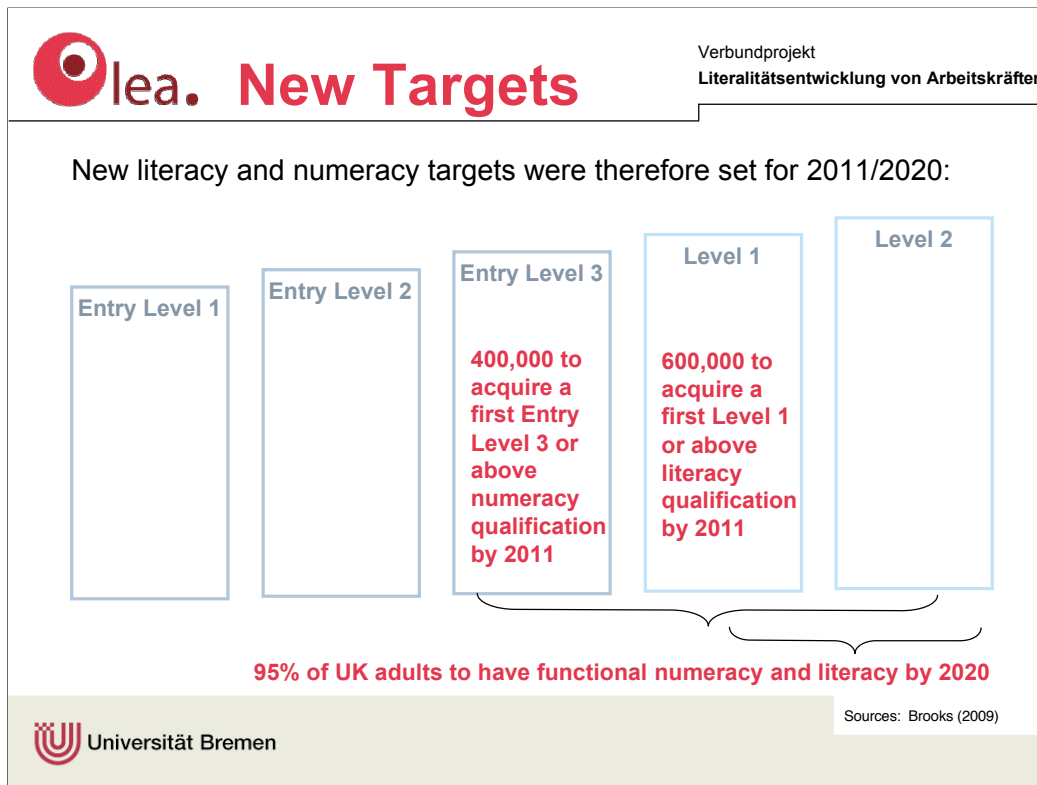
In 2007, the DfES was split into the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). DIUS took responsibility for Skills for Life and adult basic skills more generally. In 2009, DIUS was in turn merged with another department to form the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and the BIS is now in charge of Skills for Life and the Leitch agenda and targets.



The UK government had set targets for the numbers of people in England acquiring a first adult literacy or numeracy qualification: 750,000 by 2004, 1.5 million by 2007, and 2.25 million by 2010 (Burr, 2008).

All three targets have been met; in autumn 2008 the UK government announced that the 2010 target had been met, and exceeded, two years early – 2.8 million people had gained a relevant qualification by then.

However, the numbers were established not by surveys but by analysis of the national database of qualifications achieved, which had been maintained by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Whilst these numbers refer to people who had come forward as adult learners and to young people in vocational training, it might be that they do not represent the population as a whole (Brooks, 2009).




Recently, new targets have been set for 2011 and 2020 respectively. These targets are in line with the recommendations from the Leitch Report (DfES, 2006):

By 2011: About 600,000 people of working age to acquire a first Level 1 or above literacy (including ESOL) qualification, and about 400,000 to acquire a first Entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification.


By 2020: 95% of adults in the UK to have both functional literacy (Level 1 or above) and functional numeracy (Entry level 3 or above).

The aim is to ensure that the UK remains a high-skilled and competitive economy. It is not yet clear how the 2020 target is to be reached, except that the 2011 target is meant to be a staging post on the way. It is clear that reaching periodical targets is portrayed by the government as showing the success of its basic skills strategy, when surveys of the wider population might not show such a positive picture (Brooks, 2009).



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- The UK government plans to replace the basic skills tests by functional skills tests in 2010/11
- The test for literacy is likely to be broadened to include speaking and listening skills alongside reading and writing



Sources: Brooks (2009)

There are a few changes coming up in the way of testing basic skills: The tests at Entry level and Levels 1 and 2 are due for replacement in 2010/11 by functional skills tests. These new skill tests are currently being piloted by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and by the Learning Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).

It appears to have been decided that the functional skills tests for literacy will include not only reading and writing but also speaking and listening. Furthermore, learners will be able to gain a qualification only for all four skills at once and only for whichever is their lowest level across the four skills (Brooks, 2009).



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Skills for Life Strategy Unit	www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus
Learning and Skills Council (LSC)	www.lsc.gov.uk
Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)	www.lsis.org.uk
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)	www.qca.org.uk/
learndirect	www.learndirect.co.uk
Train to Gain	www.traintogain.gov.uk



Burr, T. 2008. *Skills for Life: progress in improving adult literacy and numeracy*, National Audit Office (NAO), London: The Stationery Office.

Brooks, G., R. Davies, et al. 2001. *Progress in Adult Literacy: Do Learners Learn?* London: Basic Skills Agency.

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Williams, J., with Clemens, S, Oleinikova, K. and Tarvin, K. 2003. *The Skills for Life survey: a national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.* Norwich: The Stationery Office.