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Seminars and Conferences

Celebrate and promote learning in families with a Family Learning Festival!

Family Learning has been used to support the implementation of a wide range of policy initiatives across Europe, from integration of migrant families and increasing community cohesion, to improving adult skills and raising children's achievement. In England it has been a key strand of the Learning Revolution, a Government White Paper that set out plans to support informal adult learning. In October 2009 this culminated in a festival, which saw an estimated 351,000 family members enjoying a new learning experience as part of the Campaign for Learning's Family Learning Festival. Nearly 3,000 events took place across the country. One of the aims of the new European Family Learning Association which is being launched in 2010, is to see this kind of energetic celebration taking part across Europe. The benefits for organisations taking part are huge. They include an opportunity to build new partnerships and reach new audiences for your work, especially those least likely to engage with learning. Let us know about your ideas for running events in 2010. Contact Juliette Collier at jcollier@cflerning.org.uk or find out more on our website www.familylearningfestival.com

EFLN

European Family Learning Network

NEWSLETTER

Family Learning refers to a whole variety of activities, programmes and contexts where parents, carers and children are involved in learning. Family Learning aims to provide intergenerational education to help address the inequalities and underachievement faced by many parents and children in our society.

EFLN is a multilateral network which runs from October 2006 to September 2009, focusing on Family Learning in all its aspects. If you would like to take part in the seminars or join the online network more information can be found at : www.efln.eu

"Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family: Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one."

Jane Howard 1935-1996

In this issue read the EFLN Conference Report and find out about the creation of the new European Family Learning Association.



The newly elected Board of the European Family Learning Association: From left to right Radu Szekely (Finland), Stine Aasheim (Norway), Marissa Pablo-Duerr (Germany), Rachel Schembri (Malta), Françoise Grudler (France), Lisa Vernon (Finland/UK), Juliette Collier(UK)

This is the sixth newsletter from the EFLN. All the articles and further information regarding the network, partners, seminars and best practice can be downloaded from the web site www.efln.eu



European Family Learning Network

The final conference of the European Family Learning Network was held in Stratford-Upon-Avon in September 2009. The event was a wonderful opportunity to find out some of the diverse ways family learning is being used to stimulate learning and get some innovative ideas to support effective practice. An interesting range of European speakers provided some fascinating presentations on the European vision for a learning society, as well as research evidence and case studies on the impact of family learning. For a copy of the full programme and the conference presentations please click [here](#).



Conference delegates attend a Civic Reception hosted by the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon in England

From the evaluation 100% of the delegates said that they were satisfied with the conference and would recommend the event to others. 78% gave the conference the highest possible rating. For the full evaluation report please click [here](#).

Summaries of Speaker Presentations

A European Vision for a Learning Society

Hélène Banegas, EACEA

Hélène, representing Angela Vegliante, Head of Grundtvig Sector at EACEA outlined the history of the European policy context for lifelong learning, from the seeds that were created through the Treaty of Rome in 1957 to the Lisbon Strategy, which created a new framework for the adult education sector and the current Lifelong Learning Programme launched in 2007, which was designed to create a single integrated structure. Visit our website to [download Hélène's presentation](#).

Assessing the Impact of Family Literacy Programmes

Helen Casey, the Executive Director, NRDC

Helen gave an interesting presentation on the impact of family literacy programmes and the intergenerational transfer of disadvantage.

Conclusions included:

- Among parents with Level 2 or below qualifications, the better the parents' basic skills, the better their young children's cognitive skills are likely to be.
- This holds true when controlling for education, socioeconomic status and a wide range of other key variables.
- There was no gender effect: neither mothers' nor fathers' skills were more important.
- Strong implications for policy.
- Policies aimed at increasing parents' basic skills may have potentially large intergenerational effects on the cognitive skills of their children.
- There is particular scope for policies targeted at low qualified adults.

You can [download the full presentation](#) from our website.

An Empirical Perspective on Intergenerational Learning

Julia Franz from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

Julia summarised her research with adult learning providers and participants in Germany, which analysed the different types of family and intergenerational learning and the role of these models in helping us respond to demographic changes in society. Her empirical research concludes that intergenerational learning is a very useful learning approach to connect different generations and that it may assist in strengthen learning processes in changing societies in a number of different ways:

1. Intergenerational learning as family learning
Strengthens family learning processes within institutions
2. Intergenerational learning as connecting different generations
Supports learning between and participation of all generations and in their local communities
3. Intergenerational learning as a pedagogical arrangement
Enables the examination of differences in post modern societies

Parental Involvement in Norway

Hilde Grankel, Head Teacher, Norway

Hilde described the fascinating work that she has done to involve the parents at her school in supporting their children's learning. The school, which is based in Hamar in Southern Norway, has embedded the work so that they now have over 98% of her parents attending a 'parent school', when their children first start at the school. The programme provides parents with the understanding and practical tools to actively help their children and Hilde says it is the cheapest thing she does, but also the most effective! The programme gives parents the confidence to engage fully with school and has created a clear culture and expectation of valued partnerships. Visit our website to [download Hilde's presentation](#).

Learning Among Adults

Lisa Vernon, Director for Family Learning, Västra Nylands Folkhögskola

Lisa's presentation entitled 'You Live and Learn', posed some fundamental questions about what adults are learning across Europe and 'what are they learning for; a knowledge economy or a knowledge society?' Lisa set out the skills needed for a knowledge society; curiosity, resilience, creativity, resourcefulness, communication, responsibility and confidence. The presentation also identified family learning as a catalyst for developing a knowledge society. *'Family Learning means we can learn together about absolutely anything by using the skills and experiences of different generations, valuing one another's experience and enjoying one another's company.'* The challenge for the future is promoting the role of families in developing the skills for a sustainable knowledge society. Visit our website to [download Lisa's presentation](#).

Birth of the new European Family Learning Association in Shakespeare's birthplace

The event also marked the creation of a new European Family Learning Association, which will take forward the work and legacy of the EFLN. Radu Szekely from the Adult Education College of Vastra Nyland in Finland has been appointed as the President of the new Association.

The purpose of the new Association is to promote and support family learning at European level.

The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Achievement

Professor Charles Desforges

Charles conducted the seminal research review commissioned by the UK Government in 2003 that indicated that parents' impact on children's achievement is more significant than schools' influence, particularly up to the age of eleven. The report also concluded that it was what parents *do* and the quality of the 'at home' communication that was most significant, regardless of the parents' social/ economic background.

In his presentation Charles outlined a strategy for family support that included creating personalised approaches, founded on strong local partnerships and unpinned by a coherent vision and sustainable resources. He also identified some central delivery principles to create learning families and some dangers we need to guard against with our work with families. Firstly he stated that we must avoid stigmatising or infantilising parents and creating a culture of dependency. He also emphasised how important it was to embed learning in all family work and stressed the importance of family learning to learn, in order to create a learning culture in families. Visit our website to [download Charles' presentation](#).



Education and Culture DG

Socrates

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If you require further information about any aspect of the EFLN please visit: www.efln.eu or contact the Project Administrator - Tracey Kent tkent@cflerning.org.uk

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