

# RECOMMENDATIONS

*for language training for allophone migrant adults with little or no  
readership / writers in an immersed situation*

FOCAALE

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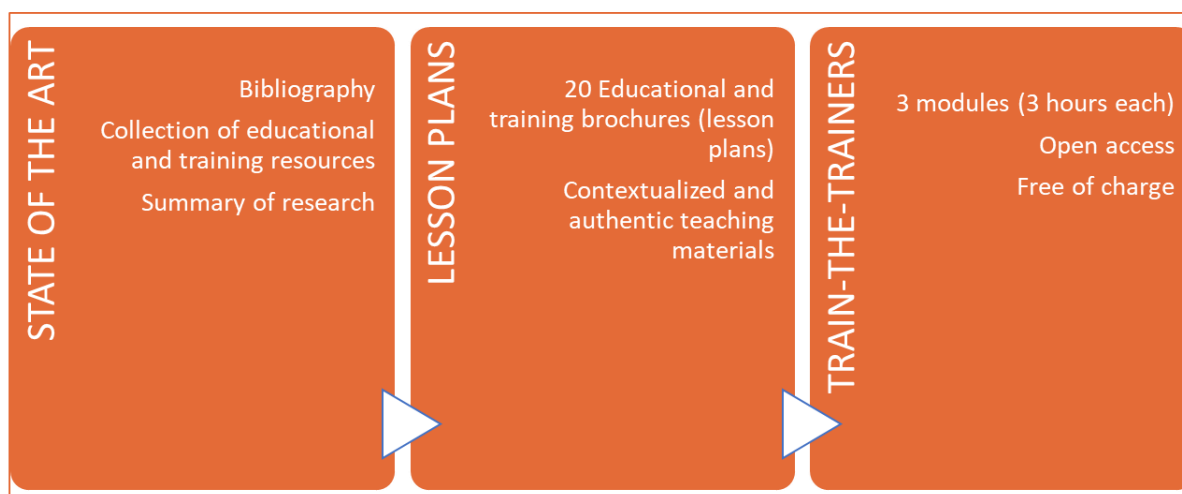
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## I. INTRODUCTION:

The FOCAALE project, funded under the EU Erasmus+ Programme, aims at improving teaching French for adult migrants with low or no writing and reading skills by pooling the expertise of three French-speaking EU countries, represented by the project partners: France Éducation internationale (FEI) and the Réseau des Acteurs de la Dynamique ASL (RADyA) in France, Proforal ASBL and Bruxelles FLE in Belgium, and the Centre de Liaison, d'Information et d'Aide pour les Associations issues de l'Immigration au Luxembourg (CLAE) in Luxembourg.

During the three years, the FOCAALE consortium has been working together to , test and share dedicated training materials, and to create an online train-the-trainer course.

The project outputs have been developed through a closed collaboration among the project partners, which has contributed to produce materials harmonized and contextualized for each participated country.



The three outputs listed above relate to each other: the inventory carried out through the state-of-the-art analysis thus justifies the methodological approaches adopted for the creation of the teaching materials (lesson plans and educational/ training materials), as well as for the online train-the-trainer modules on the theme of the acquisition of reading and writing skills by adult migrants with low or no writing and reading skills.

The recommendations produced at the end of the project are the last deliverable of the project. They have been presented to a poll of sixteen selected experts who have been discussing and analysing them during the project final event, FOCAALinaire, a webinar organized by Proforal and Bruxelles FLE, that has gathered more than 100 participants to acknowledge the FOCAALE results and exchange around the main themes of the project. More information about the event is available on the Bruxelles FLE webpage.

While translating and summarizing the FOCAALE recommendations in English, we have tried to highlight the findings that are likely to be transferable to other languages and countries and that, in our opinion, deserve to be discussed and addressed at a global level.

In order to help the English readers' acknowledgement of the present document, hereby is a list of terms used in this report :

- *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): international standard for working out the ability within a language. It was established by the Council of Europe and aimed at validating a language ability. It describes what learners can do across five language skills (Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production, Listening, Reading and Writing) and consists of six levels within (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2).*
- *French as a Foreign / Second Language (FLE – Français Langue Étrangère) course: type of language course targeting non-native French speaking adults who do not have the French language skills corresponding to level A2 of the CEFR.*
- *Literacy course: we have used this term to translate the French “alphabétisation”, which targets any adult, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, culture or social origin, who does not know how to read or write, or does not master the basic skills and knowledge corresponding to the end of primary school in any language.*
- *FOCAALE target group: non-native speaking adult learners with low or no writing and reading skills (in the report we refer to them as “learners” and “trainees”, as the closest terms to translate the “apprenant” and “stagiaire” French words).*
- *Language trainers: this term is used to refer to language trainers/teachers working with the FOCAALE target group.*

## II. THE FOCAALE PROJECT

*The project “Learning how to read and write functional French in context for adults”, FOCAALE, aims at supporting migrants who are learning French and have received little or no education, by producing dedicated teaching material and designing an online training framework. The online training in its turn, will contribute to the development of trainers’ skills in this area.*

*Linguistic integration is key to the migrants’ autonomy and integration in their receiving country. Following recent immigration waves to Europe, the International Organization for Migration’s Displacement Tracking Matrix has recorded 390 432 entries by sea and land in 2016, followed by 186 768 entries in 2017, that is a total of 577 200 arrivals within two years. The EU countries adopted policies to enable newly arrived migrants to learn the language of their receiving country. However, these learners make up a heterogeneous audience with varied levels and backgrounds, which makes teaching a complex task. Regrettably, it has been reported that among a group that is highly disadvantaged and vulnerable, adults who have received little or no education do not receive effective instruction. One of the reasons for this is that the teaching materials available for this specific group in French speaking countries are very limited. In addition, lessons are delivered by volunteers who work for charities but do not have the need for additional support in acquiring new skills to teach this very specific audience.*

*The FOCAALE project provides an answer to this specific issue by fostering the collaboration between 4 partners located in 3 French speaking countries (Belgium, France, and Luxembourg) and who represent the main stakeholders in this field: organisations responsible for training teachers of French as a Second Language, institutions in charge of delivering French classes to migrants and associations which strive to facilitate their integration.*

*The project first produced a full inventory of research studies, teaching material and good practices already available in participating countries. This inventory led to producing a comparative summary, which revealed the progress and obstacles of teaching French to adult migrants who cannot read or write and will be followed by the design of specific teaching materials, which has been tested with actual migrants. As soon as it has been finalised, this teaching materials were completed by an online training pathway. This framework will be made up of free access modules and will aim at providing language trainers with the necessary skills to teach French to adult migrants who cannot read or write, skills that were identified through the inventory. These activities led to the publication of recommendations that will aim to raise awareness among the numerous stakeholders in the field, therefore ensuring that the project results effectively contribute to improving linguistic support for adults with limited literacy skills.*

*As a result, by dealing with the issue of teaching French both from a trainer’s and a learner’s perspective, the FOCAALE project will contribute to improving the level of French of adult migrants newly arrived to French-speaking countries and to professionalising trainers in charge of this specific group.*

## 2.1 FOCAALE PROJECT PARTNERS

The FOCAALE consortium is composed by four partners representing three French-speaking countries of the European Union:

- [France Éducation internationale](#) (FEI), France,
- The [Réseau des Acteurs de la Dynamique ASL](#) (RADyA), France,
- Proforal ASBL and [Bruxelles FLE](#), Belgium,
- The [Centre de Liaison, d'Information et d'Aide pour les Associations issues de l'Immigration au Luxembourg](#) (CLAE), Luxembourg.



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### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 Empowering the trainers: trainers must have the necessary resources to address the learners' needs

*The state of the art in research carried out through the FOCAALE project shows the impact on various types of training materials on learning outcomes, engagement, and potential job opportunities for the learners*

*The choice of material is also directly linked to the teaching approach adopted by the trainers. In this regard, school-based approaches should be avoided with adult learners and a holistic approach is recommended. Holistic approach in adult education allows one to consider the heterogeneity and non-linearity of the learners' life and learning paths, as well as for the differences in terms of family situation and status, available financial support, individual achievements, cultures, etc.*

*The FOCAALE project focuses on non-native speaking adults who are involved in a language learning process in an immersion setting, where they are often confronted with complex documents and situations. In order to take into account and address their specific needs, it is thereby crucial that the trainers have the necessary and appropriate resources. As a result, the teaching material should be as contextualized as possible. Moreover, the educational approaches should consider the trainee as a whole (holistic approach), thus avoiding school-based approaches.*

##### *Options for action:*

- *Encouraging the use of contextualized authentic teaching material.*
- *Encouraging the use of material that are of real interest to people enrolled in training, such as story-telling and other expressive educational activities (workshops, physical expression, sport, etc.).*
- *Promoting the creation of partnerships between training actors and other local actors to adapt and/or develop such contextualized teaching materials.*
- *Promoting collaboration between all the actors involved in reception and training of non-native speaking adults in order to better understand their complex and heterogeneous needs.*
- *Organizing the courses, including timetables, and learning groups' constitution, while considering these needs and the realities behind them.*

#### 3.2 Boost the sector's professionalization: the professionalization of trainers' role must be encouraged, strengthened, and supported.

*Non-native speaking adult learners with low or no writing and reading skills are at the core of the FOCAALE project. In order to address their specific needs, the continuous training of language trainers should be supported and encouraged. It is therefore crucial to develop a well-tailored training for language trainers working with this public.*

*To this extent, the lack of specific and continuous training may also result in teaching methods that are not suitable for adult learners (such as the school-based approach). The training of language trainers is therefore needed to allow them:*

- to be able to identify the learners' needs and address them;
- to develop, adapt and use suitable material for developing literacy skills;
- to work with culturally heterogeneous groups.

*Options for action:*

- Developing and implementing specific training courses for trainers to meet the needs of non-native speaking adult learners with low or no writing and reading skills.
- Providing for training schemes for trainers that also integrate the facilitation dimensions, notably addressing the specificities of culturally heterogeneous groups.
- Creating moments of exchange and reflection between literacy and second language trainers.
- Supporting trainers in their practice by promoting training for coordinators, collaboration between peers and involved persons and organizations in language courses for adult migrants a few educated.

### **3.3 Enhance the role of the non-profit sector: the collaboration between the associative non-profit sector and the institutional world must be promoted.**

*The work realised by the partners of the FOCAALE project points out the importance of the non-profit sector in the reception and training of non-native speaking adults. More specifically, the non-profit organisations can make up for some of the shortcomings in the implementation of concrete training schemes in the participating countries, for example, the lack of a clearly understandable language training's offer, the implementation of pedagogical innovation, and the lack of the trainers' training.*

*Since the political and institutional settings impact the organisation of language training for non-native speaking adults, collaboration between the associative non-profit sector and the institutional world should be promoted.*

*A continuous re-evaluation of the institutional strategies and considering the evolution of knowledge about learning and/or the evolution of learner profiles, could thus make it possible to improve the supervision, organisation, and implementation of language training for migrants. A deep reflection on the collaboration between the associative and the institutional world is therefore needed, to find suitable compromises between institutional requirements and the realities of the trainees' work.*

*Options for action:*

- Enhancing the setting up of working groups and networks including on a European/international scale can allow operators to work together while addressing the specific needs of trainees, to be able to make the most of them during the orientation, positioning and group formation phases.
- Thinking beyond traditional categorizations (such as literacy, French as a foreign language, socio-professional integration schemes, etc.) by promoting needs-based schemes that consider the vagaries of life, as well as the learners needs (social, economic, financial...).



- *Accepting a margin of error, adaptation, and heterogeneity by relinquishing some formal control over learning devices and favouring progressive follow-up.*
- *Encouraging the possibility for trainers to train, discuss, exchange, and reflect together.*

### **3.4 Support the testing of innovative training schemes: trainers and field operators must be encouraged to test and implement innovative training schemes for non-native speaking adults.**

*This recommendation is closely linked to the previous one: for the role of the non-profit sector to be recognized, it is imperative to give field operators a certain degree of flexibility to test new approaches, methodologies, and tools.*

*It is also essential that field operators receive support from the public authorities, considering a fair balance between the "time in the training room" and the "preparation and training time", thus allowing them to reflect, train, plan, prepare as a team (and including external partners if necessary), and test innovative teaching methods.*

*For this purpose, it is therefore necessary for the field operators to have autonomy and flexibility in the orientation phase, as well as for the groups' constitution and the planning of programs to be followed; in collaboration with the institutional world (recommendation III).*

#### *Options for action*

- *Involving the trainees in the dialogue and in the creation of training schemes to consider their needs not in a theoretical way but on a direct knowledge for the target groups.*
- *Encouraging the implementation of pilot projects that allow operators to test new solutions, while promoting the creation of hybrid and multisectoral schemes, thus accepting the possible margin of error that inevitably comes along with innovation.*

### **3.5 Close the gap between research and practice: the collaboration between field operators and the academic world must be promoted.**

*One of the common obstacles encountered in the FOCAALE participating countries is at the research level. To this extent, the state of the art in research carried out through the FOCAALE project shows that there are few studies in the area of the acquisition of reading and writing skills by non-French speaking adults. This results in heterogeneous practices on the field, sometimes involving "do-it-yourself" methodologies and approaches. It is therefore essential to promote, support and strengthen the dialogue between research and field actors so that the work of one can support that of the other and vice versa.*

*It is therefore essential to promote, support and strengthen the dialogue between research and field actors so that the work of one can support that of the others and vice versa.*

*Options for actions:*

- *Facilitating the creation of partnerships between research and field actors to test pilot projects promote new practices and launch innovative initiatives.*
- *Creating moments of exchange and reflection between research and field actors to:*
  - *improve understanding of the specificities of the target groups.*
  - *facilitate the implementation and testing of innovative schemes that meet the real needs of the learners.*
  - *encouraging the dialogue between researchers and practitioners to sustain the implementation of specific learning and teaching solutions by sharing and seeking a link between knowledge and know-how.*

**3.6 Support the learners to get out of the training room: learning community development must be supported and the collaboration between all the actors involved in the reception and training of non-native speaking adults must be encouraged.**

*The FOCAALE project has been carried out through the collaboration of four partner organisations in three European countries having as common denominators the French language and a role in its teaching to allophone audiences. In the three participating countries, we were able to observe, document and analyse certain common needs, particularly regarding the need to close the gap between the actors involved in the language training of adult learners with low or no writing and reading skills. This need involves different and heterogeneous actors and is, in some way, transversal to all the FOCAALE recommendations.*

*Therefore, the last FOCAALE recommendation points out that all actors involved in the language training of adult learners with low or no writing and reading skills should participate in the creation, development, and implementation of a "learning community": to collaboratively discover, develop, test and experiment with new practices. Such communities could foster the creativity of participants and create an opportunity to develop new skills and partnerships.*

*The sharing of this space, both physical and relational, would also represent a lever for facilitating the implementation of actions and initiatives allowing learners to "get out of the training rooms" by re-appropriating other spaces for social, cultural, and professional interaction, as advocated by several of the approaches put forward by the FOCAALE project, particularly regarding the Sociolinguistic Workshop Approach (Ateliers Sociolinguistiques – ASL).*

*Moreover, the development of a learning community in this field would facilitate multi-sectoral collaboration by creating synergies with, on the one hand, local actors working both in the same sector (adult education) and in different ones (such as, for example, the institutional, private and cultural sectors), and, on the other hand, with actors who work elsewhere but share the same issues (international cooperation).*

*Options for actions:*

- *Promoting the participation of adult language education actors in international cooperation projects, particularly regarding cooperation in the European Union (Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, etc.).*
- *Creating opportunities for actors from different sectors to meet and build common projects.*
- *Creating moments of exchange and reflection between literacy and French as a foreign language's operators, to encourage dialogue between the two sectors, as well as for the planning of training courses adapted to non-native adult speakers with low or no writing and reading skills.*