



Nordic Network for
Adult Learning

Basic literacy education for adult second language learners in the Nordic countries.



Outline

- What does the Alfa Council do?
- What does basic literacy education involve?
- Insights into the Nordic countries – similarities and differences.
 - Looking ahead.

What does the network Alfa Council do?

The network Alfa Council (Alfarådet) consists of representatives from the Nordic countries. But what do we do?

- Exchange experiences, materials and research related to the network's focus area: education of adults with a different mother tongue than any of the Nordic languages and who have little or no formal schooling and are developing basic literacy.
- Organise meeting places for teachers and researchers.
- Aim to ensure that education is tailored to the target group and of good quality.

Learning to read and write as an adult – in one's second language

- Learning to read and write is a human right.
- Learning a second language – learning to read and write in a language one is in the process of learning.
- UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Functional literacy – being able to participate in activities that require literacy.
- Resource perspective – everyone has experiences that teaching can build upon.

Basic functional literacy

Being functionally literate in the Nordic countries requires the ability to handle various written-related challenges, such as being citizen, parent, employee, consumer, student, self-employed individual, patient, association member and job seeker.



↑ Functional literacy
Basic functional literacy

A stylized map of the Nordic region, including Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland, rendered in a light blue color against a white background. The map is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the slide.

Insights into the Nordic countries

Finland

- The target group is primarily found in basic adult education and in free education's reading and writing courses.
- The learner's background, life situation, and study goals determine the possible form of education.
- There is no national test for assessing literacy in Finnish or Swedish. Each educational provider assesses their students using their own assessment material.



Finland

- The educational provider determines the qualifications of the teacher. In the qualification regulations, there are no specific requirements for basic adult education. However, the teacher must be qualified either as a subject teacher or as a primary school teacher.
- For citizenship, demonstrated ability to use Finnish or Swedish in speech and writing is required; either through grades from primary/secondary school or by taking a general language examination.

Finland

Life situation and study goals

Young adult (17 years)	Adult		Young or adult
Insufficient basic education and literacy, deficiencies in study habits.	Insufficient basic education and literacy, deficiencies in study habits.	Varied educational background, including vocational or university degree.	Previous knowledge or degree, need to strengthen knowledge in the Latin alphabet.
Basic education is possible.	Basic education is possible.	Need for flexible/practical studies due to life situation, family situation, or study conditions.	Integration education is possible.
Short-term goal to complete basic education and right to further studies.	Short-term goal to possibly complete basic education.	Short-term goal to learn the Latin alphabet and language through the need for flexible/practical studies.	Short-term goal is employment, vocational training, or university studies.
Basic education for adults, subject studies in basic education.		Integration education in adult education.	Integration education.

Transition to the workforce after education – study placement, study guidance, and financing of education.

Adult Gymnasium, adult education line, folk high school, civic institute.	Civic institute, folk high school, institute, summer university.	The employment agency's acquired actor.
Through the municipality or employment agency.	Through the municipality or employment agency.	Through employment agency.
State-funded: basic education.	State-funded: free education.	State-funded: employment agency.

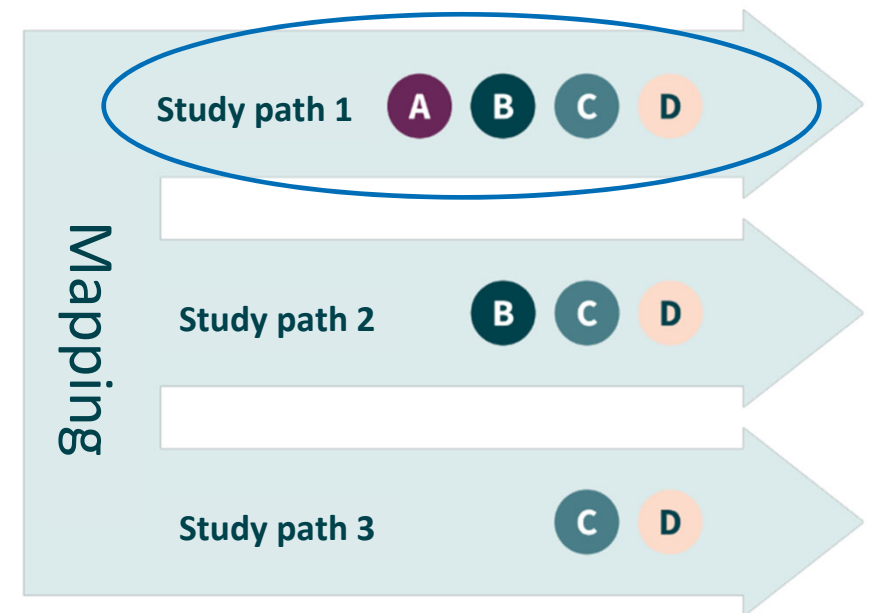
Sweden

- New (2022), simplified grading scale for Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) with two grades: Pass and Fail.
- A qualified, certified teacher, with 30 higher education credits in Swedish as a second language, is eligible to teach SFI and thus basic literacy and writing skills.
- Sweden does not have language requirements for citizenship (yet).



Sweden

- The target group is primarily found in Swedish Immigrants (SFI) on Study Path 1.
- Instruction in literacy and writing is not a separate course but can be provided concurrently with studies in Courses A-D.
- Literacy and writing instruction do not have their own knowledge criteria in the curriculum.
- There is a national mapping material for basic literacy (which is optional to use).



Norway

- The target group is found in Norwegian language education for immigrants (Integration Law), some attend preparatory adult education, FVO (Training Law).
- Instruction in literacy and writing is included in Norwegian language education with specific goals in the curriculum for basic literacy and writing.
- For teachers, in addition to a teaching degree, 30 higher education credits in Norwegian as a second language are required to teach in Norwegian language education, including basic literacy and writing instruction.
- For citizenship, documented oral proficiency at a minimum B1 level is required.



Norway

Instruction in basic literacy is part of Norwegian language education



Target group – adults who has:	End goal for Norwegian training (CEFR)	Maximum time for Norwegian training (no decided number of hours)
No completed elementary school	Verbal communication: B1 listening, reading, writing: A2	The levels have been achieved, but within a maximum of three years.
Completed elementary school, but not Gymnasium	Verbal communication: B1, listening, reading and writing: B1	The levels have been achieved, but within a maximum of three years.
Completed Gymnasium	Verbal communication: B2, listening, reading and writing: B1	The levels have been achieved, but within a maximum of 18 months.

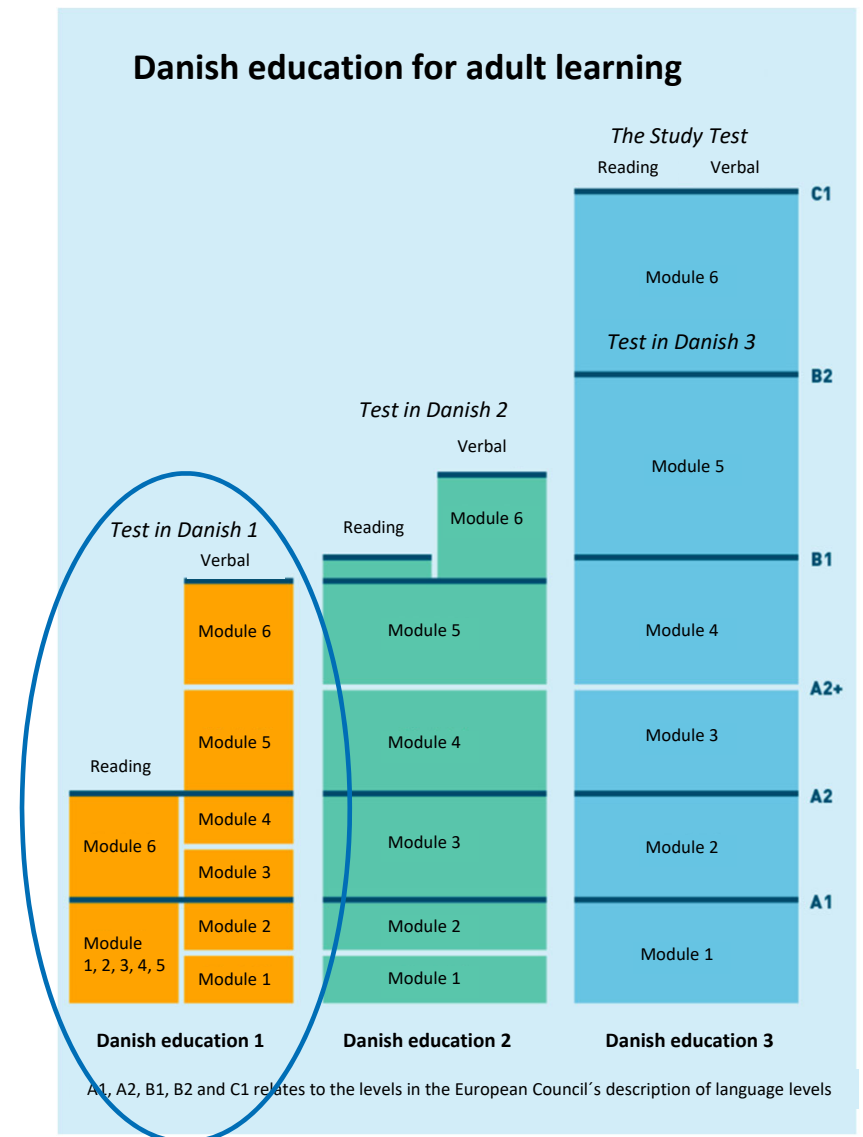
Denmark

- *The Danish language education* is aimed at newcomers. Individuals who have not had the opportunity to learn reading and writing before are enrolled in *Danish education 1*.
- To become a teacher in Danish language education, a specific education is required: Teacher education in Danish as second language (DAV), which involves 60 ECTS credits in Danish as a second language.
- In addition, there are further training opportunities with courses that address basic language teaching skills.



Denmark

- Danish Education 1 leads to written A2 and oral B1 proficiency levels (CEFR).
- Danish Education 1 consists of six modules, each with predefined learning objectives. After each module, there is a module test. After module 6, the final exam, Danish test 1, follows.
- Passing the test in Danish 1 can serve as a basis for obtaining a permanent residence permit, but not citizenship.



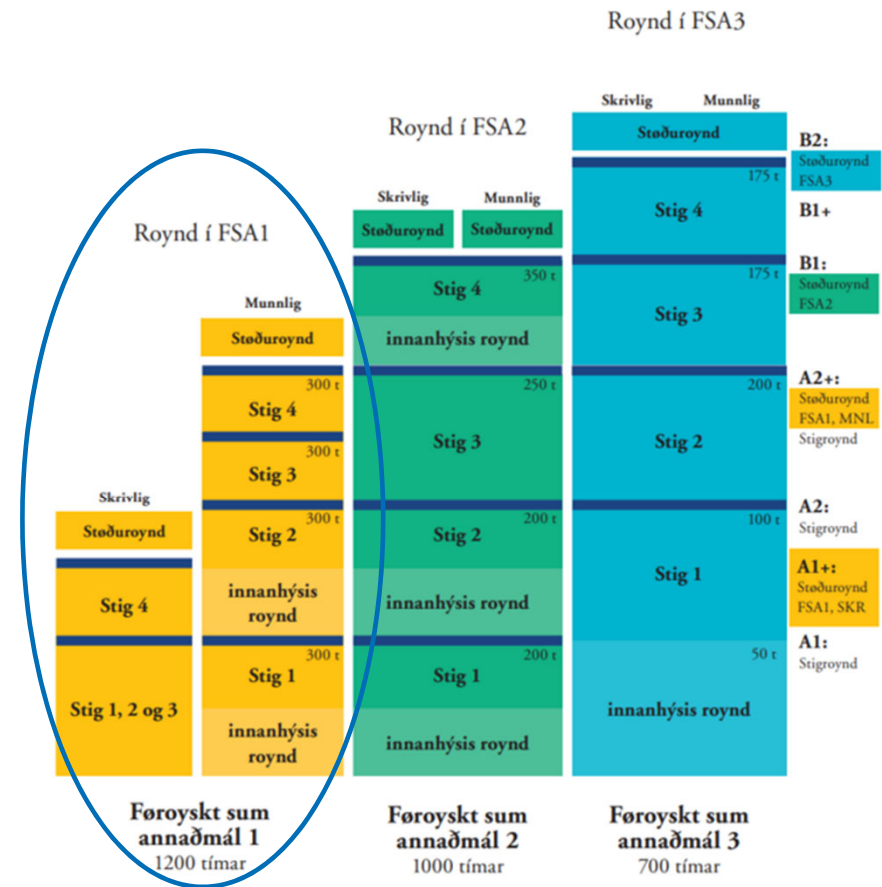
The Faroe Island

- There is no integration law in place.
- There is a lack of teacher education in Faroese as a second language for adults. A Master's degree in FSA was offered as a pilot programme to teachers from primary and secondary schools (2021). The teacher education programme proposes that FSA should be offered as a subject.
- For permanent residence permit: Currently, the language proficiency and integration in society are determined by the police, which may change with the proposed integration law.



The Faroe Island

- Evening school offers Faroese as a second language (FSA) according to CEFR, but there is currently no law or formalised process for this.
- There are limitations on access to the education depending on the immigrant's status.
- FSA1 (Faroese as a second language 1) is estimated to take 2.5 years to complete.



A1, A2, B1 og B2 relatera til stigini í CEFR
(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

Iceland

- There is no curriculum that regulates the education for our target group – the education takes shape with different educational providers.
- Financial support from the government is provided to authorised educational providers that offer courses in Icelandic as a second language for adults living in Iceland.
- There are no longer courses available for second language-speaking adults who want to develop basic literacy skills.
- The framework for Icelandic as a second language, for both children and adults, is under revision.



Iceland

- There are many different arrangements (internships, evening courses). There are some courses in Icelandic in which the teacher and students share the same native language.
- There is a lack of teaching materials for adults with limited educational background.
- Many teachers in adult education work on short-term contracts, which makes it difficult to build a common knowledge and experience base.

Similarities and differences

Differences

- Different language levels are required for residence permits and citizenship.

Similarities

- The field of education is constantly changing in all Nordic countries.
- None of the Nordic countries have specific competence requirements for teaching basic literacy for adults.

Looking ahead

- There is a need for more research (both qualitative and quantitative) on adult second language learners developing basic literacy in a Nordic context.
- More opportunities for further education for teachers who teach basic literacy.

Contact information

For email addresses of the members of the Alfa Council, please refer to the contact information on our website:

<https://nvl.org/alfaradet>

Supplementary Reading

Literacy and Second Language Learning for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LASLLIAM):
European Framework for Language and Literacy Development up to A1. Available at:
<https://rm.coe.int/prems-008922-eng-2518-literacy-and-second-language-learning-couv-texte/1680a70e18>

KAN Report:

Franks, Q. & Skeppstedt, I. (2007, rev. 2009). Mapping of Literacy in the Nordic Countries. Available at:
<https://nvl.org/content/kartlegning-av-alfabetisering-i-norden>

Competence Description of Teachers:

Franks, Q. & Christensen, L. (2013). Competence Description of Teachers in Basic Literacy for Adults with Languages other than the Nordic. Available at: <https://nvl.org/rapporter/kompetensbeskrivning-av-larare/>



Pictures – info on the pictures

Thanks to The Directorate for Higher Education and Skills and Arne Mörnerud for the pictures in the presentation.

