

Increasing participation & motivation

What does the research tell us?

Overview

- Rapid review of academic research literature
- Instruction-based programmes in a variety of formats and with a range of focuses
- More general policy efforts, e.g. efforts to increase reading for pleasure
- What I'm *not* going to do – walk you through the reports

Participation challenge

- Most adults with poor basic skills do not participate in programmes to improve those skills
- Why?
- Don't like "school" / education
- Don't feel they have a problem: most "poor performers" feel their skills are at least average

Participation challenge

- IALS, PIAAC and the ability to function in modern society
- Henningsen: *"Adults just don't know how stupid they are"*
- May be rational actors
- Individual level v national/regional level

Participation challenge

- Mandatory programmes?
- Increase participation? Yes
- Improve skills? Not yet
- Voluntary programmes -> increased future participation (no evidence on future skills gain)
- Carrots work better than sticks?

Participation challenge

- Types of policy problems: simple, complicated, complex
- Simple: following a recipe. *A basic formula*
- Complicated: sending a rocket to the moon. *Lots of challenging, interlocking formulas*
- Complex: raising a child. *NO FORMULA!*

Participation challenge

- Increase participation: complicated
- Improve skills: complex
- You *can* lead a horse to water...

- Danger of over-promising re impact of participation
- England's Skills for Life

Life course approach

- Interest in and motivation for participation is not static over time
- Cf findings on persistence: education as a parking lot or an intersection?
- Significant majority of adults participate in organised learning at some point
- But inequalities in adult education participation rates tend to accumulate over the life course
- “Matthew Effect”

Economic motivations

- Higher earnings &/or better employment (especially those with language problems)
- Learn new skills
- Be more effective in their current job

Personal and social goals

- Enrichment, enablement, empowerment and engagement
- To help themselves
- To help their children, either directly (e.g. homework) or indirectly (as an example)
- Teenage single mothers: educational disaffection, early motherhood, motivation

Barriers to enrolment

- Institutional
- Situational
- Dispositional

- Poverty is associated w/all 3 types

Barriers to enrolment

- Intrinsic v extrinsic motivations: RCT on financial incentives
- Culture of learning. Veeman (2004): Canada v Sweden

Success factors

- **NOSTE (Finland)**
- Free tuition
- Outreach activities, particularly those targeted at workplaces
- Expansion of local educational offerings
- Opportunity to study while working

Success factors

- **“Knowledge Lift (Sweden)”**
- Study grants
- Paid leave Expanded provision

- NOSTE and the Knowledge Lift both expanded participation greatly, but still failed to reach all target groups
- Cf England’s **Skills for Life**: expanded provision, improved quality, established challenging targets (for qualifications)

Programme types

- **Integrating/embedding** basic skills provision in vocational courses
- Questions:
- Who teaches basic skills?
- Are they valued by learners / courses?
- Should particular basic skills levels be required? Yes, but for which vocations?

Programme types

- **Workplace literacy/numeracy programmes**
- Can attract adults who will not participate in other forms of learning
- Tensions between goals of policymakers, employers, employees, e.g. re standardised tests
- What outcomes do these courses produce?
- How should they be evaluated?

Programme types

- **Family literacy/numeracy programmes**
- Can attract adults who will not participate in other forms of learning
- Children are the best motivation
- A very marginal field, requiring extensive cross-ministerial cooperation

Keeping them coming back

- **Learner persistence and retention**
- What's the difference?
- Both are very important
- Who/what is at the heart of the participation puzzle? Institutions or people?
- Life course approach
- Dropping out / dropping in
- Intersection not a parking lot
- Supports for informal/nonformal learning when out of formal education

Keeping them coming back

- **Retention**
- The first few weeks are all-important
- Information, advice and guidance
- Scaffolding: the right challenges at the right level of difficulty
- Tailoring learning to individual needs
- Teacher quality: broad repertoire of teaching methods and substantive expertise (Androgogy)
- Curriculum etc

Keeping them coming back

- **Facilitating and fostering persistence**
- Developing learning identity (self-concept) and self-efficacy
- Building the feeling that they can be successful learners, e.g. through regular recognition of learner progress,
- Role models e.g. from local community
- Establish a goal, and make progress towards that goal
- Qualification? Job? Postcard?

Everyday practices

- **Not everyone will “come through the door”**
- EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy recommendation: “Create a more literate environment”
- I.e. one that supports and encourages everyday practices
- Practice Engagement Theory and the Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning
- Read more -> read better – read more -> etc
- PIAAC’s everyday practices indexes



Increasing participation & motivation

What did you tell us?

Country reports: selected findings

- Objectives and target groups
- Mechanisms
- Owners, partners and cooperation
- Evaluation

Objectives and target groups

- **Lighthouse Keepers of Digital Poland**
- **Objectives:**
 - 1) Encourage people from the 50+ generation to make their first steps into the digital world;
 - 2) Address the main features of age-related digital exclusion: lack of personal motivation, fear of unfamiliar technical solutions, deficit of ICT knowledge and skills.
- **Target group:** "Digitally excluded adults from the 50+ generation (6.7 million Poles aged 55-75 do not use the Internet)"

Objectives and target groups

- **Luxembourg: Promoting basic skills as a foundation of all further learning**
- **Objective:** Educational access for all through the development of adapted and flexible basic education paths for low skilled adults. Targets are the improvement of the quality of learning provision and increasing participation rates
- **Target group:** “The estimated 3-7% of adults who do not have the basic skills required to fully and actively participate in professional, civic, cultural and social life”

Objectives and target groups

- Some issues to consider:
- **How broadly are the problem(s) and objective(s) framed?**
- E.g. Increase participation? Improve employment? Employability?
- **How heterogeneous is the target group?**
- E.g. Scotland v England (3.5% or 25%?)

Policy mechanisms: examples

- **Publicity-related mechanisms: Awareness campaigns**
- Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, others

- **Provision-related mechanisms**
- Free or heavily subsidised provision, e.g. Austria, Finland
- Expanded provision
- Higher quality provision?

Policy owners and partners

- **Cooperation and joined-up policy making**
- Complex policy problems require cross-organisational collaboration: horizontal and/or vertical
- Joined-up policy making is hard
- Policy intentions, implementation, sustainability
- And it tends to occur in areas where it's hardest to make measurable improvements
- Loads of hard work, little obvious return

Evaluation

- Almost everyone rated their programmes highly
- But only a few formal evaluations – a problem in the “evaluative state”
- Increased demand for rigorous (often quantitative) evidence of impact
- In some countries, increased focus on particular outcome measures, e.g. skills gain as opposed to e.g. learner satisfaction
- Policy making is often a very competitive sport, and a full-contact one at that

Evaluation

- Fairly easy to evaluate if outcome is simple, e.g. participation figures such as more older Poles using internet (but how to establish causality?)
- Hard to evaluate complex initiatives with multiple strands/organisations (black box)
- Frustrating findings re basic skills programmes: not so much a “black box” as a “bleak box”
- Programme failure or evaluation/policy failure?
- Sanderson: “Evaluation focuses too much on the effects of single programmes