

ISSN 2054-5355

Volume No. 87

Winter 2015

RaPAL

Commemorating 30 Years of RaPAL

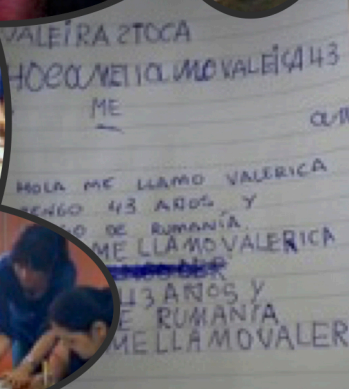
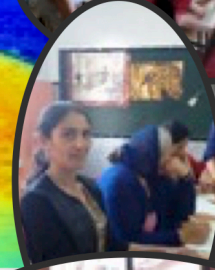


RaPAL Regional Colloquia 2015

rivers

lifelong, lifewide

literacies



Journal

The Research and Practice in Adult Literacies Network

Welcome

Research and Practice in Adult Literacies (RaPAL) is the only UK-wide organisation that focusses on the role of literacies in adult life. We promote effective and innovative practices in adult literacies teaching, learning and research; and support adult literacies practitioners and researchers. We enjoy engaging in debates that touch on English language and literacy, numeracy and digital skills across homes, communities and workplaces. Through our members, digital journals, conferences and fora, policy and advocacy work, we are active in Europe and have international links.

What we do

- Encourage collaborative and reflective research
- Publish a journal three times a year
- Create networks by organising events (including an annual conference) to contribute to national debate
- Believe in democratic practices in adult literacies
- Emphasise the importance of social context in literacies
- Critique current policy and practice where it is based on simplistic notions of literacy as skill
- Campaign for the rights of adults to have access to the full range of literacies in their lives

RaPAL Officers 2015 /2016

Chair	Sallie Condy
Secretary	Claire Collins
Treasurer	Alison Wedgbury
Journal Co-ordinator	Yvonne Spare
Production Editor	Claire Collins
Reviews Editor	Sarah Freeman
Membership Secretary	Yvonne Spare
Website Manager	Tara Furlong

Editorial Information

The editorial group for 2015-2016 includes the following researchers, practitioners and practitioner-researchers: Claire Collins, Sallie Condy, Samantha Duncan, Sarah Freeman, Tara Furlong, Julie Furnivall, Anne Reardon-James, Irene Schwab, Yvonne Spare and Rachel Stubbley.

RaPAL members are involved in the compilation of the journal as editors, reviewers and referees.

We are a friendly group – open to new members and new ideas. Please contact us with any contributions (views, comments, reports and articles) and do not be put off if you are new to the field or if you have not written for a publication before. The journal is written by and for all learners, tutors/teachers and researchers who want to ask questions about this field of work. It does not matter if the questions have been asked before. We want to reflect the many voices within adult literacy and numeracy work and to encourage debate.

Why not join us?

Further information can be found at our website: www.rapal.org.uk

The RaPAL Journal is also available from various subscription services: EBSCO, LMInfo and Prenax.

The RaPAL journal expresses a variety of views which do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial group.

The RaPAL journal has been designed by Image Printing Company, Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbyshire



RaPAL Membership form

Help us to double RaPAL's membership in 2015/2016!

We are always keen to attract new individual and institutional members. Please join us and consider passing this to friends, colleagues and libraries / resource centres and encouraging them to join RaPAL now!

Members' benefits

Membership brings:

- three RaPAL journals per year
- discounted attendance at RaPAL events
- participation in the RaPAL JISList

We are happy for our members to participate in the journals and conferences and the organisation and administration of RaPAL.

How to join

To join, please complete this form and email to membership@rapal.org.uk or post to:

RaPAL Membership, c/o Yvonne Spare, Sysondale, Anslow Lane, Rolleston on Dove, DE13 9DS, UK.

By joining, you confirm you sympathise with RaPAL's aims as stated in the Constitution.

Your details

Full name: _____

Email: _____

Please tick if you do NOT wish your email to be used in the RaPAL network

Address: _____

County: _____ Postcode: _____

Country: _____

Mobile / work / home telephone numbers: _____

To set up a standing order, please request a form from us to send to your bank

Alternatively, you may post a cheque for £ (see below for the appropriate fee)

Fees 2015/2016

Our membership year runs July to August. Please tick the appropriate subscription rate:

Digital editions

Individual membership

£40 Full-time £25 Low waged, unwaged or student

Institutional Membership

£90 per institution for up to 5 sites and up to 10,000 FTE people (staff and students)
50% discount per additional 5 sites or each additional 10,000 FTE people (staff and students)

Institutional membership allocates two votes at our AGM; and two member participation free or discount at events

Please tick here if you require an invoice

Contents

Editorials	p.2
Editorial: Tara Furlong and Julie Furnivall	p.2
RaPAL news from the Journal Co-ordinator	p.4
News from the Sector	p.5
Colloquia 2015	p.7
RaPAL's 30th Anniversary	p.11
Mary Hamilton	
RaPAL's 30th Anniversary	p.12
Brian Street	
Reflect-Action	p.14
Julie Furnivall	
Pilot Literacy Course for Roma Community in Cabañal (Valencia)	p.17
Sandro De Gregorio	
Outreach and Detached: Tapping Youth Literacies	p.21
Jennifer Shaw, Shaun Fuller and Tara Furlong	
New Literacy Studies: case studies from an NQT	p.24
Dawn Rhind-Tutt	
Con-text, cont/ext, co-text: three types of context in adult learning	p.27
Jonathan Mann	
Review/ Interview 'Further Education and the Twelve Dancing Princesses'	p.36
Rania Hafez	
Reviews	
<i>Adult Language, Education and Migration: Challenging Agendas in Policy and Practice</i> edited by James Simpson and Anne Whiteside	p.38
Reviewed by Sam Duncan	
<i>Landscapes of Specific Literacies in Contemporary Society: exploring a social model of literacy</i> edited by Vicky Duckworth and Gordon Ade-Ojo	p.39
Reviewed by Sarah Freeman	
Stories of Resilience: A Selection of Stories	p.41
Compiled by Tara Furlong	

Stories of Resilience
from Adult and Community Education

"We are collecting and publishing an anthology of inspirational adult learner stories, and would love to hear from you and your learners"

The UK's RaPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacies) and Australia's ACAL (the Australian Council for Adult Literacy), are working on a joint publication of adult literacies learners' stories, with support from our respective Adult Learners Weeks. We are seeking learner stories (tale, cartoon, story, poem, images, multimedia, audio or video... we don't mind!) of their experiences of learning English, maths and ICT as adults and in what ways this adult learning supports them to improve their quality of life. See online for information, sample stories and support materials.

Online and Face-to-Face Support

DEADLINES
2nd flush: 31st July 2015
Final Flush: 18th Dec 2015

indigenous voices
writing in letters

www.rapal.org.uk/resilience

FINAL Learner Story Submission DEADLINE: 30th April 2016

Editorial

Tara Furlong and Julie Furnivall

Further to our phenomenally experimental multi-hub part-virtual Regional Colloquia in July this year, where RaPAL celebrated thirty years, our theme of rivers and reflection has drawn us to exploring the flow from the local to the universal for this commemorative 87th edition of the journal. We refocus our attentions on the social practices approaches of the New Literacy Studies and Literacy as Social Practice which have their origins, as RaPAL, in the eighties' work of colleagues from Lancaster to London to further afield. As integral to conceptualising successful teaching and learning as research and practice are to practitioners' professional development today, the New Literacy Studies and Literacy as Social Practice approaches move us from delimited textbook literacy to locating literacies in their people, places and purposes: lifelong and lifewide.

A brief review of the Regional Colloquia is presented by Claire Collins, which highlights the challenges and successes of the morning where we worked hard to build parallel local and virtual activities. Each micro-seminar was led by a different hub and we couldn't have done it without our acting virtual MC, the very real Bex Ferriday, Learning Technologist at Cardiff University. We are also very grateful to Jim Crowther, Senior Lecturer in Education at Edinburgh University for a Keynote speech rooted in the social practices approach in adult and community education in Scotland. Tara Furlong led a rapid exploration of the last thirty years' research-underpinned teaching and learning progress. Claire Collins followed, sharing work on practitioner-led and action research. Claire will be contributing an article on the topic to Journal 88 as part of this year's Joint Conference with NIACE, UCU, the NRDC and NATECLA and kindly sponsored by the Education and Training Foundation.

We are delighted to carry commemorative pieces by Brian Street and Mary Hamilton, founder members of RaPAL, celebrating 30 years this year.

Julie Furnivall culminated the Colloquia with an introduction to the socially grounded international Reflect Action approach to ESOL developed by the charity Action Aid, which she outlines for us here. This participatory method starts with learners' home and community contexts and activities and uses river and tree metaphors to analyse issues as it works towards local political advocacy and language development.

Sandro de Gregorio contributes an article on a pilot ESOL literacy project he led with Roma communities in Valencia, Spain which was used to guide full provision this academic year. He underlined the impact of communities' social matters, daily schedules and activities on curriculum planning; and the crucial role of peer interaction and support, and the motivational features of multimodal methods and technology, in the classroom.

Jennifer Shaw and Shaun Fuller share the history of a long running Youth Bus project in the London Borough of Brent with Tara Furlong, and the successes of a collaboration with the London Borough of Westminster on tackling gang cultures across local estates. A joint journalism enterprise resulted in three magazines being produced, and developing social cohesion. While the team do not have an explicit literacies strategy, these works are part of a huge diversity of provision responsive to the interests of the young people, and indirectly underpinning their literacies development. They stress the importance of being able to put youth provision safely into the heart of target areas and its role in socialising young people into further education and training and careers advice and support.

Dawn Rhind-Tutt reflects on learner case studies culminating her teacher training year and approaches developed from the New Literacy Studies. She emphasises the bridging between day-to-day interests and activities and literacies development, and the challenges in drawing that bridge all the way across to examination standards. Balancing vernacular 'flow' and the contexts and related features of informal spoken language and home identities against the structures, accuracies and differentiation of more formal texts and audiences is a challenge in

curriculum design with the setting of primary foci for any given lesson or activity. Rhind-Tutt explores associated digital literacies and utilising technology in teaching and learning.

The Literacy as Social Practice and the New Literacy Studies rationalised engagement with context, in all its forms. Jonathan Mann leads us through a detailed analysis of three (inter)linked theories of context in teaching and learning practice. He unpicks some of the tensions between context, or learning, as social process or social product, in negotiating academic, home, and work-related influences and the corollary developmental pressures on literacies practices. Mann explores the implications of co-text: “two types of learning that can be initiated at the same time when learning is contextualised”; cont-ext: “contextualised learning is a process involving the continuation and extension of existing learning”; and finally con-text: “contextualisation is a way of effectively containing learning within one particular set of purposes or circumstances”, as he stimulates debate on their impact on theories and frameworks of knowledge and learning.

Rania Hafez talks to us about contributing a chapter to 'Further Education and the Twelve Dancing Princesses' and peers' debates on professionalism and values in the sector. She discusses the appeal of moving a metaphor of the sector from a somewhat derogatory Cinderella syndrome to the tale of the twelve princesses who managed to subvert their father's wishes and dance every night away much to the king's puzzlement as he found their worn out slippers. Hafez compares this to the inventiveness of managers and other practitioners in the sector, in the face of cuts and strict data regulation, to keep stimulating teaching and learning, engaging students on a daily basis.

Sam Duncan reviews 'Adult Language, Education and Migration: Challenging Agendas in Policy and Practice', a seminal text edited by James Simpson and Anne Whiteside which gives rich international comparisons across key themes, and successes in constructivist co-production of adult learning and social practices approaches.

Sarah Freeman reviews 'Landscapes of Specific Literacies in Contemporary Society: exploring a social model of literacy', edited by Vicky Duckworth and Gordon Ade-Ojo. The volume puts forward suggestions for meaningful modern literacy programmes in the light of critical funding cuts, and sheds light on dynamic future directions. In particular, Mary Hamilton argues for international attention to evolve from measuring skills standards to co-constructing best practice in curriculum and andragogy.

We would like to thank Sarah, our Reviews Editor, for her invaluable contributions across all the reviews RaPAL publishes, as well as for sourcing quality texts and matching them to reviewers.

Stories of Resilience is a project we have been working on with our colleagues at the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL) and we thought we would share a selection of the stories with you prior to publication of the full collection in 2016. The deadline for submissions to this project is 30th April 2016, and we would encourage you or your learners to continue to send in your stories. In this edition, Terry Easter tells us about the thorny path from addiction and homelessness to adult learning to stable employment and family reunion. Rubina Bhatti shares her experience of participating in family learning to support her sons' education, finally inspiring educational engagement and a career change in her husband. Clare Miles discusses the value of working with sophisticated literacies skills to maintain quality of life and independence in supported living. Denise Hodgson concludes a lifetime's learning with dyslexia and involvement in adult learning both as learner and star trainer.

We hope you enjoy this thirtieth anniversary edition as much as our Colloquia attendees; the wobbly transition from falling on back-ups, to smooth interactive participation and plenty to take away, think about and perhaps even act on.

Note from the Journal Coordinator

Hello fellow RaPAL members

We had a very positive editorial group meeting in September and managed to make initial plans for our next four editions of the Journal. Our next one will be the conference edition, following our joint conference with NIACE, NRDC, UCU and NATECLA in October and this will be followed next summer by an open edition, for which we invite you to submit articles or other pieces of writing about anything of interest to RaPAL members. Planning a little further ahead, we intend to follow up our first Digital Literacies Journal in 2011 with another one, as this has become an even greater part of our lifestyle since then. If you are interested in seeing how we viewed this back then, issue 74 is available to read on our website [Past Issues](#), with no need for passwords on this public archive.

As we always emphasise, we encourage submissions from everyone and offer as much support as you feel you need. There are guidelines on our website on the [Write for Us](#) page, so please come forward with anything from an initial idea to a finished article. We would love to hear from you. For any suggestions or just for a conversation, you can contact me on journal@rapal.org.uk.

In this edition you can see a variety of articles, but to make full use of our digital publication we would like to extend the range of contents even more.

- We would like to know what you think about your Journal. We are preparing a feedback section on the website so that you can comment on anything you have read in this or previous editions. Follow the link to our [comments space](#), at the bottom of the page, which needs your membership password. You may see your views printed in our next edition and, with luck, we may start a discussion.
- You will already see here our latest addition: 'News from the Sector'. This is to help to keep all of us up-to-date with developments. We would welcome details of anything that you know about in the field of literacies teaching and learning, that is happening either regionally or nationally. Send your messages to either journal@rapal.org.uk or to webweaver@rapal.org.uk and we look forward to hearing from you.

Please help us to make this a success by responding to these invitations and in the meantime, enjoy this latest edition of the RaPAL Journal.

Best wishes
Yvonne

Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...

News from the Sector

Tara Furlong

Tara is RaPAL's Webweaver and can be contacted on webweaver@rapal.org.uk

Literacy ESOL cross-over teaching and learning resources

We have received innumerable queries regarding teaching and learning and CPD resources to support teachers who have mixed literacy and ESOL learners in a class, perhaps all working towards Functional Skills qualifications. We have collected a number of these, for your reference, [here](#).



RaPAL are keen to support practitioners by adding to this resource page, and also to identify areas where practitioners believe there are particular gaps they need support. Please do get in contact and let us know.

ETF consultation on reforming maths and English Functional Skills qualifications

Details here <http://www.etf-foundation.co.uk/news/foundation-announces-first-stage-of-functional-skills-reform-programme/>

Following last year's review '[Making Maths and English Work for All](#)', which found that employers were very positive about Functional Skills qualifications, the first stage of the Functional Skills Reform Programme has been announced by the ETF. Do have your say, or let us know what you think.

New Chairs and other movements

There appear to be a range of occurrences supporting the field of adult literacies as much locally as internationally. It is an ongoing slog!

UNESCO have created a Chair in Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation, which has been awarded to the UK's Anna Robinson-Pant, of the University of East Anglia, which will be invited by UNESCO to join its prestigious universities network. The Chair programme, which will build directly on the expertise of the cross-school (EDU-DEV) Literacy and Development Group, sets out to strengthen qualitative research capacity in the field of adult literacy, learning and social transformation by working closely on research and curriculum development with partner institutions in Ethiopia (Bahir Dar University), Nepal (Kathmandu University and Tribhuvan University Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development) and Egypt (Ain Shams University). Activities will also include writing a policy paper and co-hosting an international conference with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (Hamburg), as well as establishing a UEA PhD studentship for a doctoral study connected to this theme.

NIACE

[NIACE](#) are merging with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, [CESI](#) in the new year to create the Learning and Work Institute.

Tutor Voices

This is a new (free!) network of politically active tutors in adult education with a burgeoning membership. They have an email list, Twitter and Facebook accounts if you would like to look them up.

Offender Learning

A note for our colleagues in Offender Learning, if you are not already aware, is a dedicated newsletter and section of the Excellence Gateway, available here <http://offender-learning.excellencegateway.org.uk/news-and-events>

ESIF funding rounds

European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) funding rounds from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) via (Local Enterprise Partnerships) LEPs are imminent. They will be funding locally-based work with both employed and unemployed adults. Calls for proposals are expected to come out in January/ February with very tight (30 day) deadlines.

They're looking for very large-scale consortium projects, so organisations need to make contact with partners in their areas and specify what they can offer: but there's nothing to stop organisations being part of several proposals. Campaign for Learning (CfL) has been working since the summer with the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) to publicise this funding and create a searchable database for people to make contact with other organisations they might work with in their areas.

Unfortunately, because there has been no funding for this, people are charged to join the database and access the information gathered (which includes a summary of the skills priorities of each LEP). The cost is £149+VAT for AELP members and Friends of the Campaign for Learning, and £249+VAT for others. Organisations can find out more and sign up at <http://www.aelpevents.org.uk/esif>.

Reporting back on the 2015 RaPAL Colloquia

Claire Collins

Claire is RaPAL's Secretary and Journal Production Coordinator. Claire's work focusses on adult literacies learning and development and she has worked in the UK and Europe supporting the development and roll-out of national adult literacies initiatives. Claire also coordinates and leads literacies teacher-training courses and is an advocate for the use of communication technologies. Claire co-facilitated the RaPAL Colloquium from Wirral Lifelong and Family Learning Service in Merseyside with her RaPAL colleagues; Anne Reardon-James at Cardiff and Vale College, Bex Ferriday at the University of Cardiff, Tara Furlong and Julie Furnivall at Idea Store, Whitechapel, London and Sallie Condy at the Albany Conference and Learning Centre, Glasgow.

On the 19th June 2015, RaPAL led its first series of colloquia called; 'Reflections in Lifelong, Lifewide Learner Journeys'. There were hubs in Cardiff, Glasgow, London and Merseyside, joined together by an online space and 'virtual MC'. Each hub had a group of delegates taking part in face-to-face activities with RaPAL facilitators guiding the proceedings in the hubs and online. Our keynote speaker, Jim Crowther, a senior lecturer in community education at the University of Edinburgh, spoke to the colloquia delegates from the Glasgow hub. Following from this, three workshop leaders based in London and Wirral led sessions via the Internet, with local facilitators on hand just in case technology or connections went wrong. To our great relief, and pleasure, the event was a success!

In the months leading up to the colloquia, RaPAL's management group spoke at length about the financial and time difficulties our members might face in travelling from across the UK, and abroad, to attend our yearly conferences and events. Our last conference, held at City Hospital Birmingham, was fairly well-attended and a superb day. Nevertheless, numbers attending our events have declined compared to conferences we held in the past. The management group felt strongly that face-to-face events are important and valuable to us as literacies practitioners and researchers. RaPAL members agree, based on our 2014 membership survey. We wondered, therefore, if there was any way we could use the internet and technology to make our events more widely accessible and, at the same time, locally-based for cheaper, easier travel. So, the idea of a series of connected 'colloquia' was born: events happening at the same time in many places, joined together through on-line discussion and simultaneous experiences.

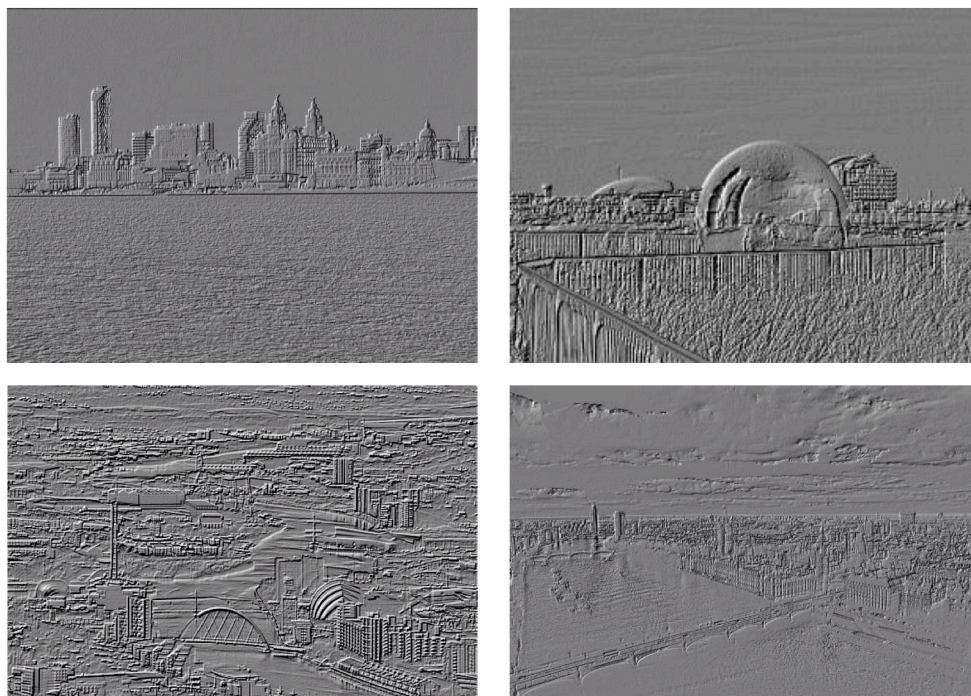
We knew the format could work because we had welcomed Australian colleagues to our 2014 'Health Literacies' conference in Birmingham, while they were sitting in Alice Springs and Sydney. You can watch the video they recorded for our conference [here](#). I remember a couple of Swedish backpackers wandering into the camp kitchen when Ros, one of our Australian workshop leaders, was talking to the audience. It was about 10.00pm Australian Central Standard Time and the backpackers appeared bemused, having walked into the camp kitchen, to see a screen of waving RaPAL conference-goers in a hospital lecture theatre, accompanied by a skeleton



covered in feedback notes. I am sure it was not what they expected to find on their journey round Australia! Opening the conference up to adult literacies colleagues so far away was, for us, a momentous occasion.

Our colloquium themes of lifelong, lifewide learner journeys kept bringing us to the idea of a river, or many rivers, especially because our hubs were all based near great waterways across the UK. The rivers Clyde, Mersey, Thames and Taff have stood witness to great periods of social change and evoke the lyrics:

"Ol' man river, dat ol' man river,
 He must know sumpin', but don't say nothin'
 He just keeps rollin',
 He keeps on rollin' along."
 (Oscar Hamerstein II, librettist, 1895 - 1960)



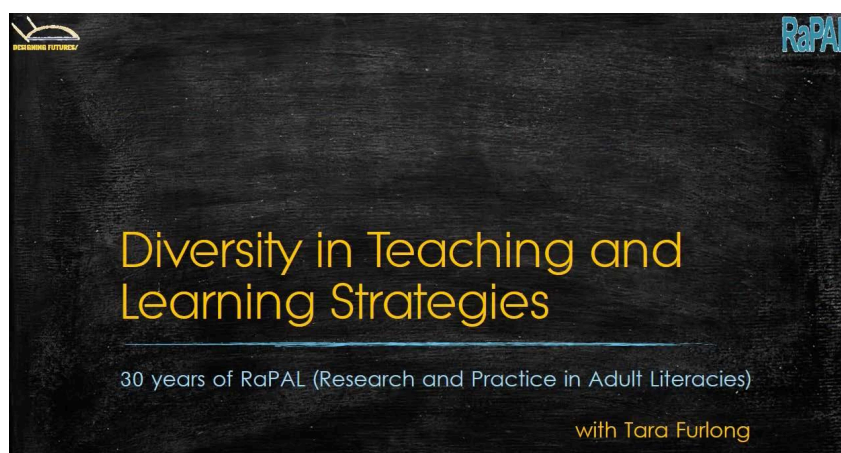
Images of the Rivers Mersey, Taff, Clyde and Thames

Being close to important rivers was also fitting for the event, as we are celebrating thirty years of RaPAL (1985 - 2015) and the flow of adult literacies practice in that time. Jim Crowther, in his keynote speech, was prompted by the conference's themes of flow, water and rivers to start with a reflection on his own teaching practice. He told us how he sometimes asks adult learners to work in small groups at the start of a learning programme and draw what they think adult education should be like. This, Jim explained, stimulates opportunities to collectively identify themes that the programme will subsequently focus on, as well as providing him with a good idea of what students value in adult education. One group Jim worked with drew a waterfall. As Jim explained;

The image of the waterfall, for them, represented droplets (individuals) and torrents (groups) cascading in a direction which led to different streams, pools, rivers and seas. In the waterfall, however, the outcome was unknown. The metaphor of the waterfall represents the possibilities of education; its final destination could not be written into the educational experience in advance. I like to think this uncertainty is central to educational experiences.

You can hear Jim's reflections on how uncertainty is central to adult literacies learners, who are engaging in Lifelong Lifewide Learning journeys and how education should be about a relationship that is built on trust (Gert Biesta, 2006) [here](#).

Tara Furlong, RaPAL's Webweaver, led the first workshop of the day, focussing on the diversity of teaching and learning strategies used in adult literacies practice. Tara gave a brief overview of the last thirty years of adult literacies provision in the UK and invited colloquium delegates to consider the diversity of teaching and learning strategies that exist and their underpinning theoretical frameworks. Tara explained that this understanding, linking theory to practice, lays the groundwork for practitioners to think about engaging in action research in their own practice. [Click here](#) to watch a video of Tara's presentation.



In the next workshop, I shared my experiences of working with practitioners leading action research projects between 2013-15. During that time, I co-led a national programme of **practitioner-led action research** in England, through which many adult literacies practitioners engaged critically with their practice and tested approaches and ideas alongside their learners and colleagues, focusing on issues that troubled, intrigued or interested them. I stressed how important this 'situated' research is, when so much of what adult literacies practitioners are supposed to do is 'driven' by external factors such as inspectors, policy, curricula and funding. In contrast I explained that practitioner-led action research:

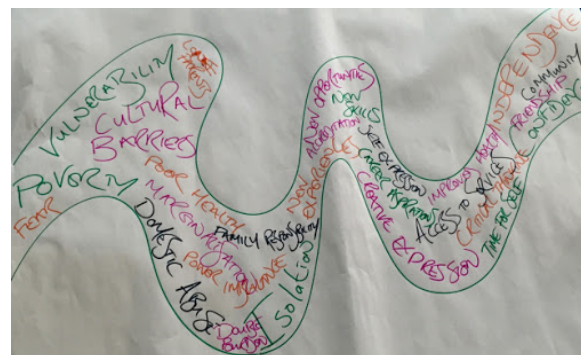
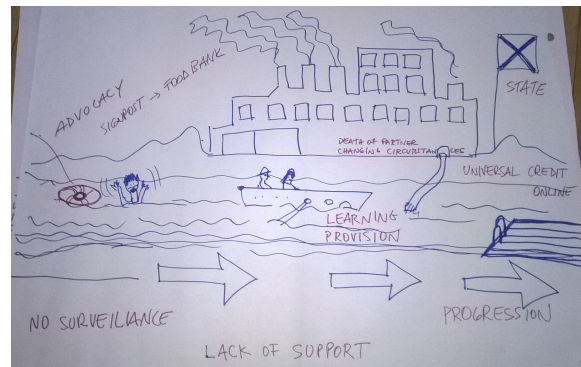
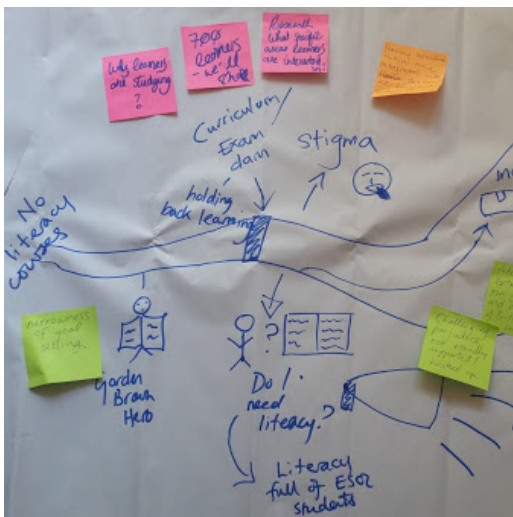
- enables practitioners to identify and enquire into real problems or issues that they encounter in their work
- develops practitioners' capacity to critically question their experience and reflect on their actions
- links practice to its underpinning theory by using theory to question practice and practice to question and inform theories
- is accessible to and usable by other practitioners in similar situations

As a collaborative on-line task for all hubs to share their ideas, I invited colloquium delegates to consider what their own 'hot topics' would be if they decided to embark on action research. You can see the ideas people shared on the day in the image below.



Julie Furnivall, a member of RaPAL's management group and the Regional Advocate Coordinator led the final workshop. Julie helped colloquium delegates to explore the 'Reflect Approach', a participatory approach developed by [Action Aid](#) to empower communities in developing countries. Reflect has been applied extensively across the UK to ESOL practice and Julie was keen to show how it also has great potential for working with adult literacies learners.

During the workshop, Julie helped delegates explore how Reflect can facilitate reflective professional practice in adult literacies settings in the UK. Then, in an experiential task, groups in all the hubs used a participatory 'Reflect' approach to examine their own journeys as literacies practitioners. Some of the 'river maps' they created can be seen below.



You can view all the day's activities, download slides and much more from the [events page](#).

RaPAL's 30th Anniversary

Mary Hamilton

Mary Hamilton is Emerita Professor, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University; and was a founder member of RaPAL.

As a founder member it is wonderful to see RaPAL reaching this 30th anniversary milestone.

RaPAL started out in the mid-1980s in what now seems like a different world, asserting the close links between research, learning and teaching. Adult literacy was hardly recognised at the time as a real field of practice or research but it was alive with the politics of learner participation, student writing, Freire's ideas of problem-posing education. It challenged discrimination of all kinds and invented itself from the grass-roots up.

The academic strand known as the New Literacy Studies also developed in the spirit of these times, and had much in common with the adult literacy movement of the time. It saw literacy as a process people engage in together, not just an individual skill, an integral part of social life, shaping and shaped by it, resulting in not just a single dimension of literacy but many varieties, based on local knowledge and context.

In claiming that teachers and learners should be recognised as powerful knowledge-makers, RaPAL has always challenged the status quo and its presence has never been more important than now where adult literacy is increasingly defined and measured by distant experts.

It is good to see that RaPAL continues to promote the excitement, discovery and importance of literacy through these ideas and to offer spaces where practitioners can discuss and develop them.

For some of the early history, see this collection of articles from the RaPAL journal:

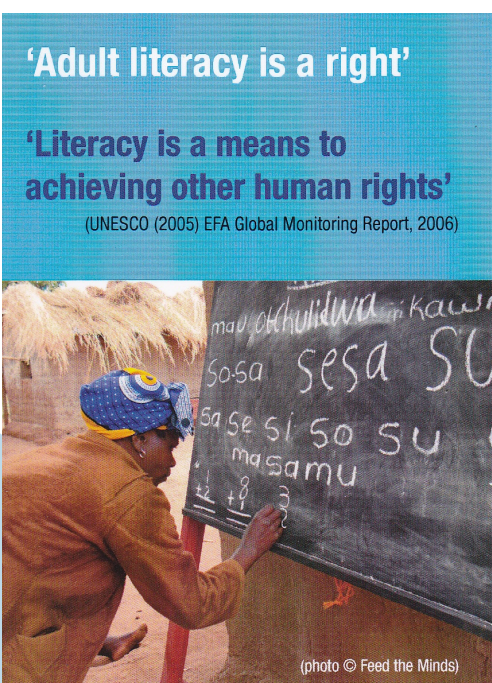
- Herrington, M., & Kendall, A. (2005). *Insights from research and practice: a handbook for adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL practitioners*. Leicester: NIACE.
- RaPAL Journals 56, 57, 58 commemorating 20 years in 2005 <http://rapal.org.uk/journal/previous-issues/>
- See also RaPAL Bulletin Issues 66, 67 <http://rapal.org.uk/journal/previous-issues/>

RaPAL 30th Anniversary

Brian V Street

Brian Street is Professor Emeritus of Language in Education at King's College, London; and was a founder member of RaPAL.

In a recent edition of the RaPAL Journal (Vol 75, 2011), Jan Eldred wrote about the work of the Literacy Working Group, a co-ordination of agencies that draws upon the Literacy as Social Practice (LSP) perspective. I see this as a great link with the longer historical association of different organisations in the field and with the early roots of RaPAL, which began in 1985. A year before that, I had written a book 'Literacy in Theory and Practice' (1984) in which I challenged the narrow view of 'literacy' that still dominated government agencies: a view of 'skills' that I termed an 'autonomous' model – a model that assumed that in learning the skills associated with reading and writing, learners would be involved in a process that was somehow 'autonomous' of social practice, that the skills would be somehow free of social context. In contrast, I suggested we should adopt a more social, 'ideological' model of literacy, which recognised that literacy practices vary with context, culture and age and are rooted in power relations – hence the use of the term 'ideological'. One consequence of this view was that teachers and learners needed to move away from the deficit culture that had blamed adults for their 'illiteracy' and instead build on the social skills and knowledge they already had. As I put it, 'Instead of approaching adult illiterates as 'lacking in self-esteem', and in need of 'comprehensive resocialisation', we could offer special skills for specific purposes, respecting their own perceptions of what they need and putting a lot of theoretical effort into providing a political and ideological framework in which that choice is possible and meaningful' (Street, 1984, p. 218). It was this view of Literacy as Social Practice (LSP) that, I believe, was adopted by RaPAL at a meeting in Lancaster in 1985, at which a number of academics and practitioners got together to exactly challenge the dominant model and develop a programme – and an organisation – that could advocate a more 'social practice' view of literacy, to be applied in learning projects and in actual everyday practices.



As one of the founding members of RaPAL from that early meeting in Lancaster, and also of the British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID), which also emerged at that time to apply these ideas in an international context and of which I am currently President, I can reflect on these developments and think about how those early ideas relate to current practice and to our signposts for future work.

For instance, the broader story signalled by these movements in the 1980s, of which RaPAL was a key focus, is captured in the statement signalled above by Jan Eldred in the recent RaPAL Journal, in relation to the Literacy Working Group. In conjunction with that account, BALID, in liaison with Action Aid, Feed the Minds, NIACE and UEA, recently published a leaflet under the heading 'Adult Literacy is a Right' that attempts to capture and spread this ideological view of literacy and learning. In the leaflet,

we call upon international development organisations and agencies to offer financial and technical support to develop policies which improve access to adult literacy learning.

How, then, does this view link with the work and beliefs of RaPAL? In a book written in 2012 and published by NIACE, Alan Rogers and I attempted to link work in theory of literacy and international organisations with that of more local 'agencies' in the UK; we listed 'advocacy groups like Action Aid, LWG, RAPAL, and many others for which "certain themes occur frequently: literacy as human rights; issues relating literacy and language; literacy and

inequalities and capabilities' (Rogers & Street, 2012, p. 168). This citation in 2012 is an example, then, of the way RaPAL has been involved in these debates throughout its history and is occasionally referenced in relation to the founding issues, which I see as associated with development of the view of Literacy as Social Practice.

In looking back over this positive history we can also, of course, ask the question 'where do we find ourselves today?' I would argue that RaPAL, as its journals in fact strongly indicate, continues to advocate a social practice view of literacy and to see learning as part of cultural meanings rather than an isolated 'skill'. Reading the current journal and thinking back to those earlier accounts, suggests a continuity that I also note with BALID and indeed with many of the agencies working in this field today. And indeed, the same political and ideological struggle is necessary as in earlier times, as government agencies and also international associations (see the current debates labelled as [Global Monitoring Reports](#)), continue to put forward an autonomous model. Whilst we may, then, identify some change in the way contemporary organisations handle this, we can also recognise the importance of the view of literacy and the associated practice and learning styles that RaPAL has been associated with for the past 30 years.

References

Eldred, J. (2011), *The Literacy Working Group: Advocating Adult Literacy in International Development*, RaPAL Journal vol 75 Available online <http://rapal2012.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/rapal75.pdf>

Rogers, A. and Street, B. V. (2012) *Adult Literacy and Development: Stories from the Field*, London: NIACE

Street, B. V. (1984) *Literacy in Theory and Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

UNESCO (2015) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* Paris: UNESCO Available online <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report>

From global to local: Using the Reflect-Action approach in regional colloquia for literacy practitioners

Julie Furnivall

Julie Furnivall has been a freelance trainer, consultant, and English for Speakers of Other Languages/ literacy tutor for the past 10 years. Prior to that, she was Assistant Principal at a sixth-form college in Hackney. Julie was part of the senior management team that set up the college from scratch. Julie has also managed English and ESOL provision for a variety of providers, and has led student services provision in London and Hertfordshire. The concept of learner empowerment has been central to all of these roles.

In Bangladesh, El Salvador and Uganda, an innovative approach to adult learning and social change was developed between 1993 and 1995. Called Reflect or Reflect-Action, the approach is based on participatory methodologies, and has been used with considerable success across the globe.

One of the most exciting innovations in adult literacy over the last 15 years has been the development and spread of the Reflect approach, which won UN Literacy Prizes in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2010. Reflect has been successful in linking the literacy acquisition process with individual and community empowerment – strengthening the capacity of millions of people, particularly women, to secure their basic rights. As such, Reflect is widely considered a highly effective force for social change and there are many examples of Reflect programmes that report significant development benefits ranging from improved health, women's empowerment, diversified and enhanced livelihoods, active citizenship, HIV prevention and mitigation, and girls' empowerment.

<http://www.reflect-action.org/adultliteracy>, (accessed 15 October 2015)

Here in the United Kingdom, some ESOL learners and practitioners have taken the Reflect-Action approach, and have developed the Reflect ESOL movement – again with some significant success.

Question

Could the *Reflect-Action* approach be used by literacy practitioners, to look at power relationships in our current work, and to help us to influence our future?

This was the question raised at RaPAL's regional colloquia held on 19 June 2015. The format for this event was particularly interesting. Practitioners met in hubs in Cardiff, Glasgow, Merseyside, and London, and were linked to each other via a video conferencing facility.

The colloquia provided an opportunity to focus on a broad theme of **reflection**, which included a wide variety of journeys in the context of **lifelong lifewide learning**. To support the theme, we used River of Life synonyms: waterway, beck, branch, brook, course, creek, delta, estuary, headwater, mouth, rill, riverine, rivulet, run, runnel, source, stream, tributary, watercourse, waterfall.

Participants were offered a 'taster' of the Reflect-Action methodology, as the concluding session of the colloquia. They agreed that - if a significant chunk of time were available - the approach could indeed be useful in potentially bringing about social change within literacy work.

We began our 'taster' by finding out more about the Reflect movement. I acted as facilitator, and began by talking about the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. His most well-known publication is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which influenced much of the thinking behind the British adult literacy movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

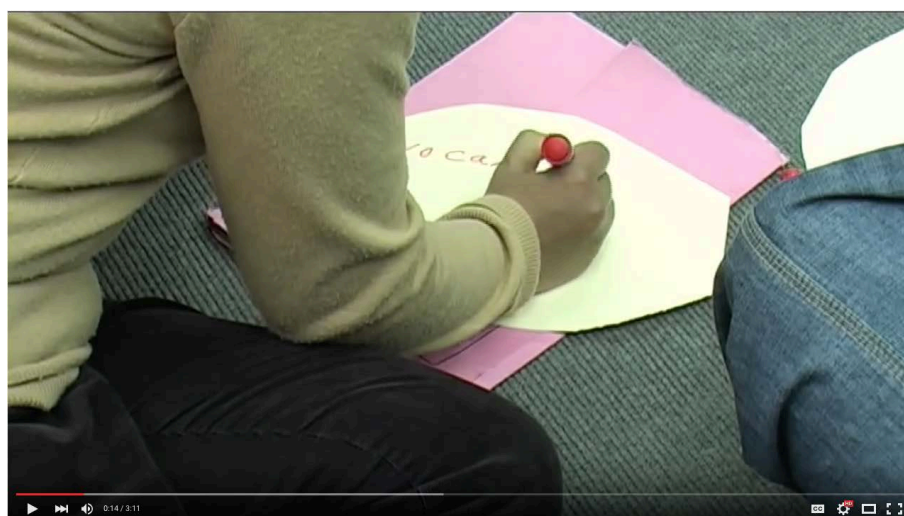
Freire saw dialogue as central to the praxis of adult education. He insisted that dialogue involved respect. It should not involve one person acting on another, but rather people working with each other. Too much education, Paulo Freire argued, involved 'banking' - the educator making 'deposits' in the educatee. In the Reflect-Action model, the approach to adult learning and social change:

... fuses the theories of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies. It was developed in the 1990s through pilot projects in Bangladesh, Uganda and El Salvador and is now used by over 500 organisations in over 70 countries worldwide.

Reflect home page www.reflect-action.org (accessed 15 October 2015)

'Fusing Freire's theories with participatory methodologies' is something that sounds complex, but is – in fact- a simple idea that places the learner in the driving seat (metaphorically speaking, of course!). A good way to learn about Reflect-Action methodologies would be to watch the video about the Reflect Circle programme, on the home page of the website www.reflect-action.org. Here we see a facilitator encouraging village women to use visualisation and to graphically plot their homes in relation to the positions of basic amenities such as water, community centres, temples etc. In so doing, the women are encouraged to question the caste system and the power relationships within it. As a result, they are able to argue for their basic rights.

Here in the UK, the Reflect ESOL movement has encouraged learners to illustrate with drawings the issues that are relevant to them, and to develop ideas about what they want. They have subsequently been empowered to fight for their rights at work and at home, and have even been able to lobby Parliament. Here's a video about a Reflect ESOL class.



Another example, is that on Wednesday 14 October 2015, some learners went to the Houses of Parliament to protest against cuts to ESOL provision. This was reported in the press, and there was considerable interest on social media. All of these examples show participatory learning at its best. At the regional colloquia, we discussed the characteristics of good participatory learning. Participatory learning should have:

- Analysis, reflection and action
- Power awareness
- Grounding in experience
- Language arising from the chosen context
- The teacher as facilitator/language expert

As the Reflect Circle video shows, the starting point for learning is often a visualisation of the issues. This could result in graphic illustration in maps, diagrams, photographs, or an image. A tree image is a popular tool, with the problem or area for exploration depicted on the trunk. The causes of the problem are then discussed in a group and recorded on the roots. The effects of emerging issues are recorded on the branches.

At our regional colloquia, we used a river for our visualisation process. We used the river as a tool to think about power awareness as it related to ourselves as literacy practitioners. As we drew rivers, tributaries and river banks, we reflected on our journey, and focused on the direction in which we might flow in the future. We asked ourselves these questions:

- What will the power structures look like?
- What will be the enablers on the journey?

The resulting drawings have been photographed and stored on a Google Plus page, along with other material from the regional colloquia. You can access them via the RaPAL website, or you can view the page [here](#).

Time constraints in June meant that our session was only a taster of the Reflect-Action process. However, all agreed that there was potential for using this methodology to reflect on our own roles and the political contexts in which we work. Through examining our situation in detail, it could be possible to see the way forward more clearly, and to find ways to challenge the status quo, in each of our individual contexts and collectively.

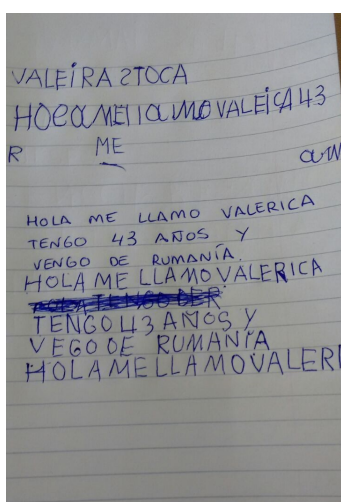
We concluded by remembering that Freire believed that literacy was about both reading words and reading the world. It seems to me that this is an important concept to bear in mind in a context driven by targets, shrinking budgets, accreditation, and scant attention to low-level learners.

Pilot Literacy Course for the Roma Community in Cabañal, Valencia, Spain

Sandro De Gregorio

Sandro De Gregorio is a tutor in Valencia, Spain and is engaged in postgraduate study in social development. Sandro can be contacted on sandrodegregorio.prof@gmail.com

Cabañal is a district of the city of Valencia located near the sea which has been showing clear signs of deterioration for the last 10 years. Official statistics show that immigrants comprise 15% of its population: 1 person in 7. 40% of the immigrant community of this area is Romanian Roma, i.e. 1176 people (Ajuntament de València, 2014). Real numbers of course don't match official statistics and the actual population of the area is far from being evaluated.



In December 2014, I performed what in Spain is called an 'Análisis de la realidad' (Analysis of reality), i.e. a detailed study about the social development of a specific area, Cabañal, in this case. Thanks to the cooperation of local entities such as [Santiago Apóstol School](#) (a primary school which works mostly with Roma children), [Fundación Secretariado Gitano](#) (a Spanish ONG focused on the Roma population), priests and charity ONGs, I was able to draw the following scenario describing the characteristics of the Roma community in Cabañal:

- Most of them are illiterate, including in their native language, Romanian
- Most of them lack legal permission to live in Spain
- Their living conditions (lodging, medical assistance, food) are far from being acceptable
- Among all other immigrant communities, the Roma are the ones that present the lowest level of integration with Spanish people, being excluded from almost all aspects of social life

These findings led Jordi Bosch (a teacher at Santiago Apóstol School), José María Martínez (a psychologist at Fundación Secretariado Gitano) and me to choose the Romanian Roma community as the target population for a social intervention. We started to ask: What could we do to help them? Which would the area of intervention be?

One of the conclusions of the 'Análisis de la realidad' investigation was that the basic needs of the Roma population of the area are:

- Literacy
- Employment
- Medical assistance

These three key factors are interconnected with each other and form a potentially dangerous spiral, from the social point of view. This is evident in other areas of Europe such as in Italy, and where immigrants may easily find themselves excluded from social life, while increasing intolerance is growing among people and political parties.

Where could we break the spiral?

Conversations with Jordi Bosch, from the Santiago Apóstol School, and José María Martínez, from Fundación Secretariado Gitano, helped to identify literacy as the key parameter on which we had to focus our activity: by reading, writing and simple mathematical operations the members of this community would be able to better understand the social reality that surrounds them, have new opportunities to find employment, advocate their children's right to medical assistance, as well as to increase their self-confidence as a community and ultimately work for their rights together.



Once we fixed the target, the following question was: Which is the most appropriate teaching and learning methodology for our Roma? The answer to this question is the reason why there's a 'pilot' in this article title: we didn't want to apply classical pedagogical approaches. We had basically two guidelines:

- solving specific problems of the Roma community (e.g. fulfilling social aid forms: expressing clearly the symptoms of a disease; getting the supermarket cards)
- group working (i.e., horizontal structure in the classroom workflow): participation as a fundamental pillar of our pedagogical approach (coming directly from Vygotskian theory and interactive groups practice)

Why these guidelines? As a matter of fact, they both reflect the Vygotsky (1978) Zone of Proximal Development Theory: working towards the students. If we tell them about their health, the social aid they could apply for, the techniques to find a job, we're establishing a connection, a starting point based on what they know. From that point, we assume we could work towards what they do not know: reading and writing.

Moreover, if they work in groups, they'll have the chance to learn from each other, since learning abilities vary deeply from one student to another, from a young one to an adult one. The basic idea was that the smartest ones could help those who need more time to assimilate certain concepts. You may be asking: 'Why involve other students? Couldn't the teacher, the professional one, just try to explain to them in another way?' Of course he/she could, but it wouldn't be the same: Vygotskian theory tells us that if a student helps another student, the one who's being helped will listen differently, more intensively. Why? Because his mate is closer to him than any teacher would ever be.

Before starting a complete year course, we decided to apply this methodology on a bench scale experience: a two-month intensive course started on May, 22nd, with 12 Roma women selected by Fundación Secretariado Gitano. Two classes per week: Monday and Wednesday from 7p.m. to 8:30p.m. The duration was set to 1 hour and 30 minutes in order to prevent tiredness in our students. The timetable was selected based on the daily activity of Roma people in Cabañal, which usually ends around 7 p.m.

The reason why only women were granted access to the course was that no men applied for it, which is one of the hardest problems we have to face when we talk about developing Roma literacy. The number 12 was set in order for the teacher to be able to form 3 groups of 4 people in the classrooms, thus implementing interactive group practice.

The course was held in the Brufol Association facilities, located in Cabañal, a few minutes' walk from the accommodation of most Roma of the area. We could count on six volunteer teachers, most of them qualified and experienced. Starting from mid-June, we also had the possibility of using a computer in our classrooms.

The first and most important difficulty our teachers faced was the complete absence of writing and reading experience of our students, whose age varied from 20 to 50 years old. This forced them to find friendly, practical methods to help the women retain the syllable structure and pronunciation. 3D letters proved to be an efficient solution in this regard: they helped the students to focus on the consonant-vowel structure and building entire words.



The computer also revealed itself as a powerful ally in developing literacy skills. It represented a new, amusing practice to some of the students, who enjoyed their time on the keyboard. This represents, in my opinion, a further key point in the debate about digital literacy versus classical literacy: is it better in some contexts to by-pass hand writing and focus directly on computer skills? These early practices appeared useful for our Roma adult learners.

The second obstacle we found on our path was the fluctuation in participation: an average of 5-6 students joined all classes, due, in our teachers' experience, above all to two factors:

- lack of motivation
- daily unexpected activities

The literacy process represented a significant effort for some of the students, which eventually led them to abandon the programme. Also, daily troubles such as finding food or their children's health sometimes prevented them from participating, above all in July, when temperatures got extremely high this year and forced many families to look for food in the late evening.

On the other hand, the problem-solving approach revealed itself as effective. During one class, two nurses were invited and explained to the students how to describe in detail the symptoms related to a fever, stomach ache, headache etc., focusing on the body elements and specific keywords.

Group working was put in practice as well and gave good results: Roma women appeared to be more sensitive and aware when other Roma tried to help them. That's an aspect which we plan to investigate further in the future.

All these collected experiences are filtered, evaluated and applied for the next course, which is taking place from September 2015 to June 2016.

References

Ajuntament de València (2014) *Població de Nacionalitat Estrangera a la ciutat de València* Valencia: Ajuntament de València

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner & E. Souberman., Eds.) (A. R. Luria, M. Lopez-Morillas & M. Cole [with J. V. Wertsch], Trans.) Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. (Original manuscripts [ca. 1930-1934])



Outreach and Detached: Tapping Youth Literacies

Jennifer Shaw, Shaun Fuller and Tara Furlong

Jennifer Shaw is a qualified youth and community worker, and BA (Hons) Sociology and American Studies graduate. Her primary motivation for pursuing a career in youth work is to develop social opportunities for young people in local communities.

Shaun Fuller is a qualified youth and community worker, and BA (Hons) graduate, who has specialised in working with those at risk and in gangs and socially excluded young people. His work includes working with homeless children and young people from the shelters of New York. Shaun's motivation for pursuing a career in youth work is to develop better opportunities for young people.

Tara Furlong has worked across private and public sectors inside and outside of education for twenty years in the UK and abroad. She has an ongoing interest in the relationship between multi-modal and contextualised versus abstracted learning; and its mirror in social and literate practice and language across life spheres. Tara is engaged in postgraduate studies in education with UCL IoE. She can be contacted on tara.furlong@designingfutures.uk



The concept of the E2G (Equipped 2 Go) bus was developed by [Brent Youth Service](#) (BYS) to engage young people from local estates and to assist schools' work as an outreach tool. The E2G youth bus was purchased in 2002. It took almost a year for the ex-music tour bus to be renovated, and it was ready for use at the end of 2003 when it was timetabled across the borough. The two tier mobile unit was kitted out with a generator, Wi-Fi, a DJ mixing station, downstairs group table areas, and an upstairs circle of laptop consoles with a large screen to the front. One of its most significant engagement projects was to support young adults to create and publish their own

periodical, including journalistic content which appealed to their own readership. Literacies development has threaded through much of the work, though often not the focus of engagement activities, nor the specialism of providers.

The bus was originally funded by four agencies: Community Against Drugs, Transforming Youth Work, Brent Youth Service, and the Children's Fund, to target young people at risk. More specifically, these are young people who fall into a catchment area where there is no immediate provision and who would find it hard to travel to another area, and young people who choose not to access mainstream youth provisions. The Outreach and Detached Team works in consultation with young people (aged between 11 and 19 years old) by first identifying needs and what they want; then responding by providing related youth activities where young people wish for them to happen.

Areas where the Outreach and Detached Team has worked in the past five years include the wards of Kingsbury, Queensbury, Lynton Close Irish Traveller's site, Stonebridge, Willesden, Neasden, Dollis Hill, Cricklewood, Fryent, Harlesden, St Raphaels, Queens Park, Kilburn, Kensal Green, Church Road, Sudbury, Wembley, Westminster (Mozart Estate), Fiveways Estate, and Woodcock Park Kenton.

A lifewide diversity of engagement projects has been developed, including sports, personal development, ASB diversionary projects, prison visits, music production, showcases, dance, drama, arts and crafts, ICT activities, youth information days and events, trips, driving lessons, film showings and discussion groups, First Aid courses, Chlamydia screenings, gaming, DJing, and karaoke. Some of these have provided accreditations, e.g. First Aid, Duke of Edinburgh, Arts Award, and driving qualifications. In particular, the teams have invested in personal development resources to assist in their work with at risk groups e.g. life skills, careers, ASB, anger management programmes, working with gangs, and a streetwise gang resource pack. As well as educational resources, BYS have

invested in free merchandise that have been provided to young people with the message life means life without guns and knives to spread a positive message and de-glamourize gangs. These resources have been offered to Connexions workers, other youth workers and YOT workers for borrowing to deliver sessions.

The bus was integrated into the toolkit of street outreach, detached activities in schools, community centres and sports centres. The E2G bus launched an ideal high profile mobile attraction which the youth teams used to access the hearts of many of Brent's most troubled estates, troubled by gang, drug, gun and knife violence, high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB), poverty and exclusion 'exactly where the young people felt safe and in their own environments'. You can watch a video about this project [here](#).



The journalism initiative was a five month Friday and Saturday night project in South Kilburn (Brent) and Mozart Estates (Westminster) running a youth-led magazine with feature articles to assist in the diversion of serious youth violence mainly through 2011 and 2012. A primary aim was to generate positive collaboration between the warring sides; in parallel, the project aimed to reduce offending behaviour and ready young people to move from NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) by taking steps such as getting onto the waiting lists for college places, attending interviews, participating in volunteering and other work experience opportunities.

From the first session, young people were encouraged to work on the youth magazine themselves through creating articles, interviews and planning activities. Facilitators might, for example in week three, hand out cue cards with key words such 'money', 'education', 'south Kilburn', 'police' and ask participants to add a word that represented how the cue word made them feel. This enabled all parties to dialogue and compare differing values and experiences, and was followed up by a presentation on being successful in the mainstream, for example with positive messages about entrepreneurial routes into employment. There was then a discussion about 'riches' triggered by the question, "Where is the world's richest place?" which elicited responses such as Dubai or China. The suggestion that the graveyard was filled with the ideas of people led to discussion about the wealth generated by people who have good ideas and what forms of self-employment the participants were interested in. At around this point it was noticed that the young people found it difficult to concentrate for more than about fifteen minutes and two-song music breaks were scheduled in. This not only helped maintain higher levels of concentration; it helped open up discussions around content in the songs such as glamorised crime, violence and sexism. These discussions enabled the team to identify issues raised by young people which they could work around in future sessions.

By week five, many ideas about articles began to float to the surface and the team saw that the intervention had the beginnings of sowing the seeds of change, though in itself not enough to build the necessary bridges between young people in conflict from South Kilburn and the Mozart estates. The young people who attended worked one-to-one with staff and completed a mind-mapping exercise. For example, one young person completed a sheet for an article around gender and the influences females have on males as well as what is seen as appropriate conduct by females. Another young person completed the sheet for an article around reviewing artists, their styles and fashion trends, videos and music. Additional article ideas were developing around writing about trainers, music charts, empty properties in London and policing. Two older members of the clique were identified as ideal candidates to be interviewed for the magazine by young people if they could present themselves as mature enough to take on that responsibility. The team aimed to get some words of inspiration from them and demonstrate through the article that they have ambition to get off the street. Their input was thought to be positive for the young people who are already influenced by their presence on the estate.



In the end, three magazines were produced: Press On from the Press Road area, [Word](#) from South Kilburn and Mozart Estate's [Lesson Learned](#). While developing skills and giving invaluable experience, the projects gave participants the opportunity to discuss how they perceive and feel about aspects of their identity, their areas and environments, their aspirations for the future, or for example, the police. In parallel, it gave youth workers the opportunity to develop constructive relationships with their target audiences and the issues closest to their development. This in turn allowed them to follow-up contact outside the E2G provision. Connections workers were able to access target groups outside of normal office hours to open up avenues of education, employment and training.

Another broad literacy-based endeavour the team engaged in was a book launch for the semi-autobiographical London-based book *Prisoner to the Streets* by Robyn Travis to assist young people and adults in choosing alternative paths to street crime and gang culture. This was a follow-up to the teams' participation in the Coldingley diversionary programme, which involved organising and escorting young people on prison visits. The team focussed on inspiring young people to read the book and identify the lessons they could learn from it.

Other initiatives BYS is proud to have participated in include:

- Diversionary projects on estates
- An intergenerational community event called Mind the Gap to assist in bridging the gap between young people and adults
- The Summer Fun Bus
- Organising youth groups to walk the Not Another Drop Peace March for 2 years in a row and offering the youth bus for the after march event free of charge
- Attending Gay Pride for the first time back in 2001
- Save a Life courses in Stonebridge, South Kilburn, North Kilburn, Harlesden and Wembley
- Organising the Youth Services' presence at the annual Respect Festival at Roundwood Park and Glastonbury Festival at Gladstone Park

We have been approached by the press and other organisations such as Young People Now, Harrow Observer, Willesden and Brent Times, ECOTEC for the LDA and the Frank bus (Home Office). Other partners have included housing associations, Connexions, Vale Farm and Willesden Sports Centres, Kingsbury Primary school (hall use for 13 – 19 year olds), Crest Academy, College of North West London, the Metropolitan police, Willesden Library, Brent Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, Not Another Drop Peace, Foundation 4 Life, Addaction, BrAVa, Ward working, North West London Hospitals NHS Trust, Westminster City Council, Victim Support, Catalyst Housing and other outside agencies that deliver a range of youth related provision.

Huge budget cuts to the borough mean an uncertain future for informal education and the flexible approach it takes to meet a range of needs. It really is a (multi-agency) team effort!

New Literacy studies: can creativity and self-expression be embedded within the classroom setting?

Dawn Rhind-Tutt

Dawn is a newly qualified teacher and is currently gaining further teaching experience within the post-compulsory sector and secondary schools teaching GCSE. She is contactable on dawnrhind-tutt@hotmail.co.uk.

Background

This article focuses upon my exploration of New Literacy Studies and accounts for the successes and limitations I faced when bringing New Literacy ideas into my teaching during my PGCE training year in Telford, Shropshire.

So what's the theory?

Simply put, New Literacy Studies is 'a socially situated and constructed view of literacies as multiple, emergent and situated in particular contexts' (Barton et al, 2000, in Ivanič et al, 2007, p. 705). The premise of New Literacy Studies is to consider how literacy events – acts that involve writing, from everyday functional writings such as compiling shopping lists, right up to and including creative writing, are used 'to mediate social life' (Ivanič et al, 2007, p. 706). Attention is given to the 'general cultural ways of utilising written language which people draw upon in their lives' (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, in Ivanič et al, 2007, p. 706) with the aim of narrowing the gap between 'vernacular literacies of everyday life and the formal literacies required within the FE context' (Smith, 2005, p. 321), a concept known as border literacies.

Narrowing the gap

A crucial challenge in my teaching practice has been ensuring I effectively bring the 'vernacular literacy practices' of students into the classroom whilst also creating tasks that meet curriculum requirements. A study by Kendall (2008) highlighting student attitudes to reading offers an interesting approach to perceived barriers that actually stem from learners themselves. The research was conducted with teenagers but the fundamental elements are applicable to teaching practice as a whole, particularly with the growing dominance of technology in society. Kendall found a link between literacy practices and identity; students were disinterested in activities such as reading broadsheet newspapers due to 'a failure to recognise or find spaces for their own sense of themselves they felt broadsheets made available to readers' (Kendall, 2008, p. 15). Barriers were established by the negative connotations students associated with literacy practices they perceived as irrelevant or did not find interesting. Experiences on placement point to a necessity to narrow the gap between the literacy practices of students at home and at college in order to ensure lessons are as relevant and interesting to students as possible. Often there is a generic aspect to literacy courses whereby the resources used are taken from examination board workbooks and are not differentiated to account for individual student interest, although they can of course be adapted to meet the needs of students.

Case study 1: engaging reluctant readers

I have witnessed a barrier, similar to the one described by Kendall (2008), with a male Functional Skills student. From my early observations of him reading a brief, informative article I deduced that he 'perceives reading as painful and is reluctant to read' (Gupta, 2004, in Smith, 2005). Smith (2005) advises engaging reluctant readers with their passions to encourage them to read. To motivate him I asked him what he enjoys outside of class and he told me he was a fan of the boxer Muhammad Ali. Integrating this into the lesson initially proved difficult, despite students in the group working largely independently on differentiated tasks. I originally devised an extensive range of questions based on a brief online biography, requiring the student to pick relevant points from the text. Ultimately, I did not present this to the student, acknowledging these 'right there' questions where the answer can be found explicitly in the text (Hughes and Schwab, 2010, p. 182) as an ineffective way to test reading comprehension. Nonetheless I was reluctant to place the student in a position of 'the reader (passive) as one who must come to know what it is that the writer (active) knows already' (Kendall, 2008, p. 19). Thus the author of the online biography was left as an unknown and the student was positioned as researcher, compiling a table of Ali's major fights and the outcome in table form. Referring to the question-answer relationship approach coined by Raphael (1970, in Hughes and Schwab, 2010, p. 182) I set the student 'think and search' questions that involved the

skill of pulling information from various parts of the text to ultimately find the 'answer.' This method eased him gently into writing, a perceived barrier for him; an attempt to reverse the role of reader as "in receipt" of a "message" which needed to be understood' (Kendall, 2008, p. 20).

The above case study was a relatively successful attempt to present reading and writing practices associated with my student's personal interests, a strategy that Ivanič et al (2007) recommend to encourage learner engagement. Although limited by the environment; there was neither computer nor whiteboard in the community centre in which the lesson occurred, I acknowledged the internet as a means to obtain the biography the student used for the task set. In subsequent lessons with the group I have encouraged them to use their mobile phones to access the thesaurus or dictionary. Many have preferred this method to using a dictionary, adapting their literacy practice to connect with 'a wider range of "semiotic systems" that cut across reading, writing, speech' (Street, 2001). Haigh (2011, p. 14) points out, we all live in a digital world 'dominated by e-mail, the internet and mobile phones'. It is evident through the prevalent use of technology that there is a 'multimodality' to literacy (Ivanič et al (2007) hence whether watching television or downloading music, students are likely to encounter 'sound, colour, pictures, symbols, as well as written words' (Ivanič et al (2007). As I will demonstrate in my next case study, I am actively exploring ways to bring the everyday digital practices of my students into the classroom (Honan, 2008, in Haigh, 2011).

Case study 2: considering relevant digital literacies

The predominant way I have brought digital practices into my lessons is to encourage students to discuss and write about them, therefore acknowledging the part they play in society. Honan (2008, in Haigh, 2011, p. 14) suggests that teachers are hesitant to introduce 'digital texts in the classroom'. There appears to have been a shift over the past decade whereby new teachers in particular are encouraged to use online resources with students, from diagnostic assessments via BKSB to interactive mobile quizzes on Socrates. Where possible I have developed resources on SmartPad for students to use via the whiteboard or created PowerPoint presentations with links to educational video clips. The notion of identity is crucial to digital literacy; the role it plays varies 'from person to person' (Mayes and Fowler, 2006, in Haigh, 2011, p. 13). For example, during a Functional Skills lesson I asked a level two student in her mid-twenties to write a short piece of writing describing a process such as taking her children out or shopping in a supermarket, taking this task from the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (DEFS, 2001) to develop writing structure. She informed me that she completes most of her shopping online and opted to write about this process instead. This is a digital literacy I rarely undertake and I felt a little outdated for not acknowledging technological literacy practices initially.

The above interaction demonstrates that the New Literacy perspective to education is desirable; it acknowledges that language and its uses are constantly changing (Street, 2001) and that the way teachers teach must adapt accordingly, moving away from a focus of 'the rules of grammar in the traditional sense' (Sealey, 1999, in Street, 2001, p. 20). Haigh (2011, p. 12) advocates that the New Literacy Studies approach: 'favours a strong use of narratives and personal life stories to help understand the relationship between literacy and social context'. I am aware that I can do more to support what Ivanič et al (2007, p. 706) term 'the border crossing of literacy practices from the vernacular and informal', by encouraging students to bring narratives from their personal life into the educational environment. Nonetheless, this can be challenging when the Functional Skills examinations do not appear to account for this creativity, but I have found the aforementioned Adult Literacy Core Curriculum a useful tool for bringing in New Literacy ideas.

Case study 3: creative self-expression within the classroom

To illustrate the benefits of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum I will draw on the same student mentioned in my online shopping case study. I asked her to compose a 'beginner's guide' of a topic from her own experience that others would be largely unaware of (DEFS, 2001, p.109). She completed this alongside another female student in her late twenties. The purpose was to encourage creative writing merged with facts about their chosen activity – mobile phone use was permitted as a means of research. They were asked to use persuasive language having previously been taught this and to read their completed guide to each other to ascertain if they could convince one another to try out their hobby or interest. The task required application of 'creative self-expression' with focus on 'writing as an expression of individual ideas' (Lillis, 2001, p. 165). Whilst students were wary of 'the meaning-making relationship in HE between student-writer and teacher-reader' (Lillis, 2001, p. 44) they did have some freedom of self-expression to discuss their

practices outside of the classroom. One student related her passion for knitting and the other wrote of her voluntary work with children. Both students presented this orally by reading their written work and afterwards informed me that they greatly enjoyed the lesson. I would repeat this activity with future students but perhaps be more mindful of how I explain the purpose and assessment of the task because a conflict arose between 'language in its rather traditional notion of grammar' (Street, 2001, p. 15) and Bakhtin's notion of 'language as utterance' (1981, in Lillis, 2001, p. 41). That is, both students wrote persuasively about their chosen topic but prepared it to read orally without any attention to checking spelling, grammar and punctuation. I noted irregular verb confusion, particularly in the work of the student who wrote of her passion for knitting, for example: 'My grandma teach me to knit' instead of 'taught me to knit.' Interestingly, she corrected herself when she read aloud and did not note this error in her written work. Despite encouraging a creative approach I felt a necessity to mark the written work for spelling and grammar errors as these were areas that would be assessed in a writing examination. As Lillis points out (2001, p. 43), there was an issue with 'addressitivity' whereby student awareness that their work was being heard by their teacher as well as fellow students influenced what they wrote. This suggests that the New Literacy approach can be difficult to fully implement in the classroom when there is a requirement for the teacher to evaluate the 'student's text as finished product' (Lillis, 2001, p. 44) in order to ensure they are meeting examination criteria.

So... does it work?

It is evident that there are many merits to the New Literacy approach within further education. As Smith (2005, p. 320) suggests: 'if FE teachers actively developed an understanding of literacy as embedded in social practice, they could explicitly tap into students' existing literacy practices' in order to 'enhance the students' learning experience.' In reality, this still appears to be a fairly 'ideological' view (Street, 2003, in Haigh, 2011, p. 12) because summative assessment, such as the City and Guilds Functional Skills examination does not take the vernacular literacies of individuals into consideration. On the whole, however, the New Literacy approach should be implemented where possible to allow students to make their learning experience personal and relevant to them and to use language in a creative way to make sense of the world. As I embark on my teaching career I will take forward many of the ideas I have explored in this article. When teaching Functional Skills students the writing component, I will give them scope to write around their own interests, be this complaining to their local football club about the cost of membership or producing informative articles persuading peers to try out their favourite sport or hobby. By assessing or encouraging students to self-assess against the examination criteria I am able to engage students as fully as possible whilst still preparing them and securing a pass grade for their exams.

References

- Barton, D. (2000) *Situating Literacies*. RaPAL Bulletin. 43. Department for education and skills. (2001) Adult Literacy Core Curriculum. London: Cambridge Training and Development Ltd: Basic Skills Agency.
- Haigh, N. (2011) *Exploring the Digital Histories, Lives and Literate Identities of Adult Literacy Tutors in Further Education*. RaPAL Digital Literacies Edition, 74, (Spring/Summer), pp. 12-18.
- Hughes, N & Schwab, I. (2010) *Teaching Adult Literacy: Principles and Practice*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Ivanič, R., Edwards, R., Satchwell, C. and Smith, J. (2007) *Possibilities for pedagogy in further education: harnessing the abundance of literacy*. British Educational Research Journal, 33, (5), pp. 703-721.
- Kendall, A. (2008) *Giving up reading: re-imagining reading with young adult readers*. Journal of Research and Practice in Adult Literacy, vol 65, (Spring/Summer), pp14-22
- Lillis, T. M. (2001) *Student Writing: Access, Regulation, Desire*. New York: Routledge.
- Smith, J. (2005) *Mobilising Everyday Literacy Practices within the curricula*. Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 57, (3), pp. 319-334.
- Street, B. (2001) *Contexts for literacy work: the 'new orders and the 'new studies'*, in Crowther, J., Hamilton, M and Tett, L. (ed.) *Powerful Literacies*. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, p.p. 13-22.

Three Types of Context

Jonathan Mann

Jonathan Mann is an English for Academic Purposes Tutor at the University of East London, teaching English to postgraduates and undergraduates within the school of Health, Sports, and Bioscience. Prior to that, he worked as an Advanced Practitioner at Greenwich Community College. He studied for a PGCE via the Open University. In addition to current research work, he has recently begun his studies on PG Cert in Learning and Teaching in HE. In addition to this, he is an active literary scholar, editing a collection of poems by a major twentieth century writer.

“Context” in context

1997 saw the publication in the UK of the Dearing Report, which envisaged the creation of a Learning Society, predicated on excellence in research and teaching, in combination with the widening of HE participation, which – its authors decided – would help the United Kingdom respond effectively to an increasingly globalised economy. Of the eight paragraphs describing the Learning Society, five focus on economic/industrial matters, whereas the remaining three deal with raising standards and widening participation (NCIHE, 1997). This report finds 'that in the long term there is considerable advantage in embedding skills into programmes' (ibid.: 135), while cautiously noting that this would require some reorganisation of courses. The need to embed skills, according to the report, is borne out of demand from employers, who 'want graduates to have a wide range of skills' (ibid.: 135), which includes literacy. The Dearing Report, then, explicitly links embedded skills provision to the demands of employers in a competitive economy.

For the purposes of this paper, context has a relatively narrow meaning. However – as Michael Cole points out in his expansive study of schema theory (see below) – this seemingly neutral word has been problematized. Cole quotes from Kenneth Burke's 1945 psychological study of motive, finding that

considerations of action and context create inescapable ambiguity because the very notion of a substance (sub stance) must include a reference to the thing's context 'since that which supports or underlines a thing would be part of the thing's context'. (Burke, 1945, quoted in Cole, 2005: 211)

That is to say, context and a learner's conceptualisation of the underlying nature of a concept are complicatedly interlinked. The pedagogical implications here are significant: without reference to the overarching subject of study, an adult literacy learner in a college or university – as Wingate (2006) points out – might not fully grasp why they have to study a particular genre convention or literacy skill. Given this, the term contextualisation of learning and its derivatives (including the word embedded, which relates to the conditions in which contextualised material is delivered) are used in this paper as a shorthand for pedagogical processes that allow the teaching of language and literacy and other skills using the lexis and concepts of a main programme of study, and its related genres. In very crude terms, it can mean teaching paragraphing to podiatrists, sentences structures to sports scientists, or language awareness to lawyers, each one to suit distinct requirements that are related either to course content, academic genre, or both (Barber, 1962 in Swales, 1990).

Contextualised teaching is a complex and time-consuming process, and it can be difficult to appreciate the impact it has. While practitioners can confidently observe that skills are successfully integrated into programmes of study, there is no easy way to appreciate how it enriches the learning process. The categories put forward in this study have been developed to assist in this regard, and – it is hoped – go some way to providing an organised approach to the theoretical reasons for contextualising literacy and language learning. Intervening with current debates, this paper aims to provide a taxonomy of contextualisation, starting from an outline of the origins of contextualised learning, and then moving towards an attempt to group current theories in accordance with three distinct categories. These are denoted by three descriptive codes that derive from the word context. Hence, theories that are placed into the category labelled co-text are those which refer to the ways in which two types of learning can be initiated at the same time when learning is contextualised. Theories placed in the category called cont/ext are those that are related to how contextualised learning is a process involving the continuation and extension of existing learning. Con-text is used as a category description for pedagogical theories

which argue that contextualisation is a way of effectively containing learning within one particular set of purposes of circumstances.

The tripartite approach to tackling learning theories allows this paper to tackle theories according to their overarching themes, and it is hoped that this shorthand approach to macro-modelling will be a useful tool for further researchers who wish to access this wide and complex range of pedagogical theories. Ultimately, contextualisation is found to be a series of complex learning processes more than a strategy for responding to narrow economic pressures that requires the teaching of skills for employability. In identifying this, the study uncovers tensions between academic study and vocational, professional, or workplace context influences. In addition to these tensions are uncovered between context, and even learning per se, as a social process or as a social product.

A number of studies of embedded/contextualised skills teaching predate the Dearing Report. Whereas Dearing recommends that skills should be embedded in courses to prepare students for the workplace, earlier explorations of the subject approach embedded and contextualised teaching from the perspective of programmes of study, and the various genres of academic text that students are required to write during their programmes of study. For example, writing seven years before Dearing – in *Genre Analysis*, a book about methods for teaching English in academic or research settings – Swales (1990) observes that adult literacy provision is increasingly linked to specific and sometimes narrow genres of academic text that are directly related to the context of a student's main programme of study. He cites works by Maher (1986) and Bhatia (1987), whose work explores contextualised, genre-based approaches to English literacy (in this case, medical English and legal English respectively).

More recent studies (such as McDermott, 1996; Nespor 2003; Edwards et al, 2009) explore how contextualised and embedded literacy provision is practiced in post-compulsory programmes of study. Whereas some studies describe academic writing as a 'social and contextual practice' (Lea and Street, 2006: 375), others have argued that learning per se is 'a specific effect of practices of contextualisation' (Edwards, 2009: 2). More recent discussions (Durkin and Main, 2002; Gamache, 2002) find that practitioners are increasingly embedding literacy teaching within courses of study, as opposed to being delivered in discrete 'stand-alone' sessions. Notably, Wingate (2009) finds – in her article about teaching study skills in Higher Education - that 'learning how to study effectively at university cannot be separated from subject content and the process of learning' (Wingate, 2009: 457). She argues for a contextualised, embedded approach, opposing it to what she describes as 'the bolt-on approach', which – she concludes - only ever 'fosters a surface approach to learning' (ibid.: 456).

Like Wingate, Edwards (2009) views context as related to the process of learning. Moreover, Edwards finds that learning context is driven by the community of learners in which a student is situated. In his introductory essay to a book about learning communities, Edwards notes how there are

theories of learning that emphasize activity and draw upon concepts of communities and networks rather than those of contexts. Here, rather than a thing, context is an outcome or activity or is itself a set of practices. (Edwards, 2009: 2)

Hence, for Edwards, 'contextualizing rather than context becomes that upon which we focus' (ibid.), as it is – for him – linked to a community of learners; it is a process of learning that involves interactions with learning networks. Like Lea and Street, Edwards identifies that contextualisation is a learning process that has a social aspect.

Whereas Wingate and Edwards argue that contextualised learning is a valuable part of the learning process itself, Catterall et al (2010) – in their narrative of embedded/contextualised literacy teaching in practice – find that there is an emotional dimension that is addressed by this process. They point out that '[n]on-embedded ... teaching' of key skills such as literacy 'tends to be perceived negatively by many students' because 'to attend them at all is seen to be a public admission of failure' (Catterall et al, 2010: 4). Accordingly, they detect amongst their students a propensity to take the view that 'to attend the writing class on grammar or punctuation, referencing or structuring an essay, is to admit that you can't do it' (ibid.). Therefore, developing out of Dearing's tentative suggestions for embedding skills teaching into curricula, contemporary debates highlight how contextualised learning is now a fundamental part of the learning process, rather than just a means to include learning material. Indeed, Catterall et al (2010)

observe that this more embedded approach to contextualised teaching represents a 'major shift ... which sites writing practices at the heart of academic work rather than at the periphery' (ibid.: 3) Contextualisation, then, can be seen as more than a simple strategy for answering employers' demands for skills teaching. Conversely, contextualisation – in recent debates – is viewed as a series of sophisticated learning processes that are used by practitioners to address the complex needs of learners.

Accordingly, there has been a significant increase in scholarship concerning contextualised learning in the last twenty years. This is evidenced by the Scopus research database, which allows researchers to identify how many articles have been published over a certain period of time, whose title, abstract, or content match certain keywords. A search of the database, limited to articles published between 1995 and 2015 demonstrates an exponential increase in the number of articles published on the subject. By focusing on two distinct but relatively arbitrary keyword phrases, it is possible to differentiate between the types of studies made. The first set of results relates to these keywords: context, embedded, learning, and higher education, which is quite a specific combination. Studies that feature these keywords are therefore taken to represent a fairly specialist niche in education theory. The second set of results relates to the key phrase contextualised learning, which – while still relating to the subject under discussion – is relatively broad. In this case, it is possible to simply trace the general recurrence of jargon that is pertinent to this field of study.

Table 1 - abstract counts from Scopus database

Keyword Set	Articles written since 1995
'context', 'embedded', 'learning', and 'higher education'	149
'contextualised learning'	1,137
Combined results	1,286

It is notable that 89% of all these articles were written between 2005 and 2015. Whereas there were just four articles published in 1995, there were 134 articles published in 2014, with 71 so far by August 2015. Between 1995 and 2004 – there were, on average, 14 articles published per year. By contrast, between 2005 and 2015 – there were, on average, 104 articles published per year, with a particular peak in 2012. This roughly tenfold interest in the subject coincides with a time of far-reaching educational policy changes in the UK and other countries. Bathmaker describes these policy changes in education as part of 'a global drive to increase levels of education associated with economic competitiveness and so-called knowledge economies', something he links specifically to the widening participation goals of the then New Labour government (1997 – 2010) (Bathmaker, 2015: 62). While exploring this link in more detail is suitable for follow-on study, it is not within the relatively narrow objectives of the present paper. Notwithstanding this, there has been a considerable rise in scholarly interest in contextualised learning in the last ten years.

Some recent research identifies possible negative effects of contextualised learning. In her study of Contextual Learning in Adult Education, Imel (2000) suggests that - in some approaches - an embracing of teaching skills (be they literacy or others) within a particularly focused context can lead to a narrowing of the curriculum. She cites both Sandlin (2000) and Dirx et al (1999), noting how

[b]oth studies found that the practice of contextual learning tended to reflect technical-rational interpretations of knowledge and that the contexts selected reflected teachers, policymakers, or curriculum developers' ideas of how the knowledge would be used and applied within that context.

(Imel, 2000: 2)

Here, Imel highlights how the range or depth of skills being taught could be effectively stymied by assuming they only

limited narrow utility. She points out how an overly-pragmatic, too narrow approach to contextualisation could result in a situation where a practitioner may

view literacy as a skill or task and thus take a particular political stance toward the creation of knowledge and the position of the learner, mainly that knowledge creation lies outside of the learner and that learners must passively react to rather than change social situations.

(ibid.)

This would certainly be contrary to the positions taken by Edwards, Catterall et al, and Wingate, which foreground how contextualisation is a learning process, and not a way to limit the scope of learning. The notion of containment of learning is expanded upon later in the present paper.

Like Imel, Fitzpatrick et al (2009) warn that there is a danger of over-simplification of learning processes, if the primary objective of embedded learning is simply to supply learners with a pre-ordained series of skills that must be learned. In particular, they find that the common frameworks of qualifications that are being adopted in Europe has led to discussions concerning the pragmatic basis of contextualised learning, arguing that

In some cases this has led to a purely reductionist approach, and the creation of a stringent set of categories and lists of active verbs, usually based around Bloom's taxonomy of learning, to be used to describe the learners' expected outcome.

(Fitzpatrick et al, 2009: 16)

Contextual learning, embedded into overall curriculum design, then, is an increasing area for theoretical study, and is not without its detractors. Following on from this account of the recent debates concerning contextualisation, it is now useful to explain the individual categories, and to explore the range of discussions available within each.

The First Type: Co-text

Practitioners are increasingly under pressure to provide sufficient space in their curricula for weaving in literacy, numeracy, ICT, or other skills, as part of their general provision. Delivering two sets of learning and teaching at the same time is complex and necessarily nuanced. It can also be difficult to judge in the classroom which parts to place emphasis on, and equally difficult to ascertain whether the layered approach is enriching for learners. Current theoretical debates deal with this dichotomy, and – generally speaking – provide an account for how this can operate to the learner's benefit.

Constructivist approaches to learning explore the idea of simultaneity in the learning process. For Cole, the very term context – when used to describe a person's learning and development - is very difficult to explain as a direct result of its multivalent nature. In amongst others, he puts forward one particular definition, which

views text and context as mutually constitutive. In the words of the Oxford English Dictionary, context is “the connected whole that gives coherence to its parts,” a definition which has strong affinities to the Latin term, *contextere*, or to weave together. When used in this way, the ability to segment [learner] and the context is problematic, but an analytic distinction that depends upon a large, perhaps uncountably large, set of factors operating in bi-directionally over time in an active process of framing that can be unraveled in an instant.

(Cole, 2003, p.1)

Following this logic of bi-directionality, the first category of context explored in the present paper is defined as co-text. Theories that are categorised under this convenient gloss emphasise circumstances where two different types of learning (for example, literacy learning and that related to a particular programme of study) may occur simultaneously, and at mutual benefit to the learner. Here, contextualised learning is a complex process which achieves two goals at once.

For Lev Vygotsky, the general process of learning involves a two-dimensional model. He notes how '[t]he formation

of concepts develops simultaneously from two directions: from the direction of the general and the particular ...' (Vygotsky, 1934/1982/1987: 312). That is to say, for a learner to fully internalise specific concepts s/he must be able to comprehend them in a general way. In Vygotskian terms, for an academic genre to be understood, it has to be decoded in relation to the technical (or scientific, in Vygotsky's terminology) material it attempts to convey. As Daniels puts it, 'Vygotsky argued that scientific concepts are not assimilated in ready made or prepackaged form. He insisted that two forms of concept are brought into the forms of relationship within which they both develop.' (Daniels, 2007: 312). Citing Hedegaard's (1998) assertion that teachers assist learners through a combination of generalisation and practical activity, Daniels goes on to find that '[t]he importance of the interplay between the scientific concepts derived in theoretical learning and the spontaneous concepts formed in empirical learning is central to this account of development' (Daniels, 2007: 314). He summarises this later, noting that '[t]he assertion is that teaching should promote general mental development as well as the acquisition of special abilities and knowledge' (ibid., p.315.). In the particular focus of the present paper the general development could be seen as the act of writing or reading, whereas the specialist abilities relate to the subject specialist programmes of study that contextualised literacy teaching is embedded within.

In his seminal essay on discourse analysis, Basil Bernstein (1999) theorises another co-text, which complements Vygotsky's notion of general and scientific knowledge. In the later study, Bernstein asserts that learning emerges simultaneously out of horizontal discourse and vertical discourse. Horizontal discourse, as he calls it, relates to common/common-sense knowledge that is only applied in certain instances. He describes this type as having 'a group of well-known features: it is likely to be oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts' (Bernstein, 1999: 139). On the basis that different academic subjects require a range of different genres, each specifically codified and carefully nuanced, horizontal discourse relates to the distinct conventions of language that each subject demands. This kind of language knowledge is very bound by its immediate context, but may be transferrable in certain circumstances.

By contrast, Bernstein's vertical discourse is specialist 'protected' knowledge (such as zoology), which has

strong distributive rules regulating access, regulating transmission and regulating evaluation. Circulation is accomplished usually through explicit forms of recontextualising affecting distribution in terms of time, space and actors. ... Basically, circulation is accomplished through explicit recontextualisation and evaluation, motivated by strong distributive procedures. ... Such distributive rules structure and specialise social relations, practices and their contexts.

(Bernstein, 1999: 139)

Vertical discourse can thus be seen as the 'home' subject that 'horizontal' language/literacy learning bifurcates. In Bernstein's logic, the two types of learning are coefficients, not mutually exclusive. This, then, can be of benefit the learner.

Implicit in Imel's observations above is the notion that practitioners need to understand the full range of the vertical discourse that the horizontal discourse will bisect. Arguably, being led by students' own understanding of the applicability of the knowledge (and developing this through staged discussion and negotiation), rather than insisting on very narrow sets of circumstances, is one solution to this.

Notwithstanding this possible limitation, co-text provides practitioners with a way of understanding the multivalent nature of contextualised teaching as a nuanced pedagogical process that works to the learner's benefit.

The Second Type: Cont/ext

In both HE and FE classrooms, cohorts are made up of learners from a very wide range of abilities and experiences. In institutions that have strong Widening Participation agendas, this range of experience can be particularly diverse. It is useful to not only understand what learners bring with them, but also to know how a contextualised curriculum enables learners to draw on that knowledge as part of the pedagogical process. The following section attempts to outline a series of approaches that are – it is hoped – of use in understanding how contextualised teaching and learning build on what learners bring with them.

The second type of contextualisation, then, is cont/ext, a shorthand term to describe how learning happens through a process of continuation and extension, catalysed by its relationship to existing epistemological frameworks. Pedagogical theories grouped within this category foreground how literacy skills can be learned pragmatically, in keeping with the demands of the academic genres that students need to use in their specific programmes of study. This practice of genre-oriented literacy learning to programmes of study grows out of existing pedagogical theories. It has already been established that contextualisation has its analogues in constructivism. Adding force to these debates, Imel (2000) - in her study of how contextualised practice is used in adult education - finds that '[c]ontextual learning is rooted in a constructivist approach to teaching' (Imel, 2000: 1) since it is 'directly related to the life experiences or functional contexts of adult learners' (ibid.). Likewise, Gibbs (2009) – as cited in Catterall et al (2010) - points out that contextualisation responds to the varying student experiences and purposes for learning.

In his constructivist explanation of context in terms of Vygotsky's theories, Cole echoes this by rooting the foundations of human understanding directly within the context in which that life experience takes place:

...all human behavior must be understood relationally, in relation to its "context" ... When we turn to technical discussions of this issue, the relevant terms include environment, situation, context, practice, activity, and many more. ... the argument turns on which comes first in human thought, the object (text) or its surround (context).

(Cole, 2005: 211)

Here, Cole identifies a tension between the idea of learning itself, and the general world context in which the learning takes place. For Imel, this relates to the notion distributed cognition. To explain this, she paraphrases Borko and Putnam (1998), finding that '[i]ndividuals often engage in collaborative learning activities and draw on resources beyond themselves in their learning' (Imel, 2000: 1). Moreover, she finds, learners will tend to cluster together in 'social communities (known as discourse communities) that provide the cognitive tools (e.g., ideas, theories, and concepts) for them to make sense of their experiences' (ibid.) Individual learners, then, can gain access to shared cognitive frameworks for extending their understanding of the world; these learning communities (which – in practical terms – can include module cohorts, reading groups, or even friendship groups), represent a larger-scale contextual learning process.

Cole's exploration of Vygotsky's contribution to learning theory in many respects echoes Imel's observations concerning shared cognitive frameworks. Citing the psychological theories of Rumelhart (1978), he uses the term schema, which 'contains, as part of its specification, the network of interrelations that is believed normally to hold among constituents that are instances of the schema' (Rumelhart (1978), cited in Cole, 2005: 206). The schema, argues Cole is a way in which humans can structure their thoughts selectively, by relating one aspect of existing knowledge to another. These parts, he observes, are interrelated, and the overall effect of this is that patterns of knowledge-relations create a gestalt whole (Cole, 2005). As such, schema concept theories describe how knowledge builds on knowledge. In this respect, the cont/ext is also a continuum and an extension of what has gone before.

Cole also demonstrates that this continuum of built-upon, interrelated knowledge (the schema) is – as Imel found – part of a network of social actors. Citing Wentworth (1980: 92), he observes how, through contextualised learning, the world is 'realized through interaction and the most immediate frame of reference for mutually engaged actors' (Cole, 2005: 26). Contextualisation in learning, he points out, may be considered 'as a bonded arena for human activity. It is a unit of culture' (ibid.). The schema, then, is also part of a community of cognition; it is a learning process where context guides the ability of the learner to associate knowledge with other knowledge. Moreover, a schema is part of a structuring framework that is defined by learners in transaction with each other.

The Third Type: Con-text

Practitioners faced with the prospect of delivering embedded sessions with close contextual reference to the main programme of study may have complex questions concerning how deeply literacy skills should be contextualised in material from the 'home' subject. Moreover, practitioners may feel the need to consider whether or not to explore with their learners the more general applicability (if any) of the genre-specific conventions that they teach. This part of the paper, then, seeks to present a series of debates that go some way to defining notions of 'subject containment' in the

contextualisation process.

Accordingly, theories of contextualisation that are placed in the con-text category relate to circumstances where learning is 'contained' in various pedagogical/conceptual units. These units of containment can be physical as well as psychological. This includes the community within which learners develop. For example, as Daniels points out, Brown, Metz and Campione (1996) observe that within a community of learners (be that a college, university or workplace), 'dialogues provide the format for novices to adopt the discourse structure, goals, values, and belief systems of scientific practice' (Daniels 2007, p. 327). He argues that – eventually – a community of learners will tend to adopt 'a common voice, a common knowledge base, and a shared system of meaning, beliefs, and activity' (ibid.). Learning, then, becomes generalised and therefore more profoundly felt when it is part of the processes of dialogue that inevitably arise from a community of learners. Moreover, the community context affects the ways in which the learner develops. As Arendt puts it: 'Contrary to classical, empiricist formulae that argue that action is guided by perception', theorists who explore the pedagogical effects of learners in specific communities 'invert the principle and affirm that, in enacting [learning].... perception will be guided by the action of the individual in the environment' (Arendt, 2008: 130). The individual learner, then, develops in relation to the context in which they are learning, and the community therefore becomes part of the learning process.

The concept of learner-in-community is not, according to current debates, a simplistic model. Lave and Wenger (2005) find that the learner-in-community model is complicated since 'viewing learning as legitimate peripheral participation means that learning is not merely a condition for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership' (Lave and Wenger, 2005). They argue that participation in learning communities implies a process lasting many years. Specifically, they point out that the learning space and the make-up of the learning community (and its conventions) are all interrelated. Here, the learning community concept, then, pivots upon the negotiation of process and place.

Lave and Wenger further problematize the notion of a learning space, by pointing out deficiencies in theories that attempt to delineate what a place of learning is. They point out that the learning process goes beyond any one particular place, as – following Vygotsky – knowledge and understanding learned in one place needs to be generalised elsewhere. They complain that recent theories of learning

are more concerned with furnishing the immediate social environment of the target action / interaction than with theorizing about the broader forces shaping and being shaped by those more immediate relations.

(Lave and Wenger, 2005:154)

Accordingly, any concept of a physical context for learning necessarily refers to a wider network of socio-psychological relationships that affect the learner's negotiation of her place within them.

The concept of the spatial-relational con-text given by Lave and Wenger is coterminous with Edwards's (2008) conceptualisation of learning contexts, which can be viewed as a series of parallel containers. For him,

a context may be considered a bounded container within which the learning takes place or a more fluid and relational set of practices. In the former, there is a sense in which there is closure to contain or structure the learning, which once acquired may, in principle, be poured from one container to another.

(Edwards, 2009: 2)

Using terminology very close to the con-text of the present paper, Edwards quotes Lave – who in turn quotes McDermott: 'In all commonsense uses of the term, context refers to an empty slot, a container, in which other things are placed. It is the "con" that contains the "text", the bowl that contains the soup' (Edwards, 2009: 2). Like Lave and Wenger, Edwards does not foresee a learning context as being a single container. Instead, following Vygotsky, he points out that learning (text) passes from one container (con) to another.

Conclusions: The Conditions of Context

This paper has identified a diverse and complex array of theories that position contextualisation as an

enriching process that goes far beyond preparing learners for employment by teaching them a narrow range of functional skills. The studies surveyed all posit context not as a definable object, but as a productivity, a process, and a continuum. Nearly twenty years after the Dearing Report, practitioners in both HE and FE have an increasingly sophisticated array of pedagogical tools at their disposal, and contextualisation – among them – provides at least three complex learning processes that work for the benefit of the learner. This goes beyond mere employability, although that narrow objective is also served.

Contextualised learning also embodies certain conditions that complicatedly relate to the present condition and social structure of knowledge bases, and how these change from context to context. Even more complex is how the constructivist theories surveyed demonstrate how an internalised knowledge framework acts in tension with the communities around it. Knowledge and its applicability is – it seems – unresolved, in flux, and permanently in production. It is hoped that three categories derived from a seemingly simple word, and the multiplicity of debates they stand for, provide a useful means by which this network of ideas can be accessed.

References

- Arendt, R., *Constructivism and meaning construction* in van Elbers, E., Oers, B., van der Veer, R., and Wardekker, W. (2008), *The Transformation of Learning: Advances in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory* (Cambridge University Press), pp. 127-136.
- Barber, C.L. (1962), *Some measurable characteristics of modern scientific prose*, *Contributions to English Syntax and Phonology*, ND, Almquist and Wiksell, Stockholm, NP.
- Bathmaker (2015) *Thinking with Bourdieu: thinking after Bourdieu. Using 'field' to consider in/equalities in the Changing field of English higher education*, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 45:1, 61-80.
- Bernstein, B. (1999). *Vertical and Horizontal Discourse: An Essay*, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20:2, 157-173.
- Bhatia, V (1987), *Language of the Law*, *Language Teaching*, 20(3), 227–234.
- Brown, A. L., Metz, K. E., & Campione, J. C. (1996). *Social interaction and individual understanding in a community of learners: The influence of Piaget and Vygotsky* in Tryphon, A. & Voneche J. (Eds.), *Piaget-Vygotsky: The Social Genesis of Thought*, Hove: Psychology Press
- Borko, H., & Putnam, R. (1998). *Professional development and reform-based teaching. Introduction to theme issue*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14(1), 1–3.
- Burke, K. (1945). *A Grammar of Motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Catterall, S., Hill, P., Tinker, A. (2010) *From deficiency to development: the evolution of academic skills provision at one UK university*. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*. 2(February 2010), 2 – 19.
- Cole, M. (2003). *Vygotsky and Context. Where did the Connection Come From and What Difference Does it Make?* Available at: <http://lchc.ucsd.edu/People/MCole/lsvcontext.html>. (Accessed 30 September 2015).
- Cole, M. (2005). *Putting culture in the middle*, in Daniels, H. (2005). *An Introduction to Vygotsky* (2nd edn). London and New York: Routledge, pp. 199-226.
- Edwards, R. (2009). *Introduction: Life as a learning context?*, in Edwards, R., Biesta, G. and Thorpe, M., (eds), *Rethinking Contexts for Learning and Teaching: Communities, Activities and Networks*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, pp.1 – 14.
- Empson, W. (1930/1947/1953/2004). *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: Pimlico.

Fitzpatrick, N., Hayes, N., O'Rourke, K.C. (2009). *Beyond constriction and control: Constructivism in online theory and practice* in Payne, C. (2009). *Information Technology and Constructivism in Higher Education: Progressive Learning Frameworks*. Hershey, New York: Information Science Reference, pp. 14-26.

Gibbs, G. (2009). *Developing students as learners – varied phenomena, varied contexts and a developmental trajectory for the whole endeavour*, *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education* 1: 1-12. Available at: <http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk/ojs/index.php?journal=jldhe&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=30&path%5B%5D=14> (Accessed: 17 August 2009). Cited in Catterall et al (2010).

Hedegaard, M (1990). *How instruction influences children's concepts of evolution*. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 3, 11-24.

Imel, S. (2000). *Contextual Learning in Adult Education. Practice Application Brief No. 12*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Center on Education for Training and Employment, College of Education, The Ohio State University, and Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Available at: <http://www.ydae.purdue.edu/lct/hbcu/documents/ContextualLearninginAdultEducation.pdf>. (Accessed: 22 September 2015).

Lave J., and Wenger, E. (2005). *Practice, person, social world* in Daniels, H. (2005). *An Introduction to Vygotsky*. (London and New York: Routledge), pp. 149 – 156.

Maher, J (1986), *English for Medical Purposes*, *Language Teaching*, 19(3), 227–234.

Mann, J. (2015) *Practical Approaches to Vocational Contextualisation*, *Research and Practice in Adult Literacy*, 86 (Summer 2015), 5-6.

N C I H E (1997). *Higher Education in the learning society* (The Dearing Report). Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/dearing1997/dearing1997.html> (Accessed 17 August 2015).

Richard Edwards (2009) *Introduction: Life as a learning context?*, in Edwards, R., Biesta, G. and Thorpe, M., (eds). (2009). *Rethinking Contexts for Learning and Teaching: Communities, Activities and Networks*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, pp.1 – 14.

Rumelhart, D.E. (1980). *Schemata: the building blocks of cognition* in R.J. Spiro, B.C. Bruce, & W.F. Brewer (eds.). (1980) *Theoretical issues in reading comprehension*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 33-58.

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1934/1982/1987). *Thinking in Speech* in Carton, A. S. and Rieber, R. W. (Eds.), *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky. Volume 1: Problems of general psychology*. Trans by Norris Minick. New York and London: Plenum, p. 163. Quoted in Daniels (2007).

Wentworth, W. (1980). *Context and Understanding: An Inquiry into Socialization Theory*. New York: Elsevier. Wingate, U (2006) 'Doing away with 'study skills'', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11:4(October 2006), 457-469

'Dancing to our tune: writing about Further Education'

Rania Hafez

Rania Hafez is Senior Lecturer in Education & Community Studies at the University of Greenwich, and Programme Leader for the MA in Education. She has researched and published on teacher education and teacher professionalism. Rania is also co-chair of the Learning & Skills Research Network (London & South East) and was previously Director of Post Compulsory Education at the University of East London and Chair of The Standing Committee for the Education & Training of Teachers (SCETT)

Writing is never easy, not least because most of us teachers feel that we have nothing of consequence to say or the time to say it. For most of the time we're running fast just to stand still; totally overwhelmed with teaching prep, bureaucratic paperwork, endless meetings, and the constant dread of being found wanting. By our students, our colleagues, management and of course, Ofsted inspectors. The fear of the 'Required to improve' haunts our every move. In over a decade of teaching teachers, I have seen them progressively lose interest in the investigative stimulation and guiding frameworks of and theories and focus almost exclusively on what 'works': how to pass an inspection; how to meet a target; how to get the blighters to behave. Developing valuable expertise cannot be based exclusively on learning how to jump through hoops like trained performers. Professional expertise needs a sound theoretical and pedagogical basis, and this is only achievable through research.

I am not blaming the teachers for this state of affairs. It was certainly how I felt after many years of teaching in Further Education. We seem to have lost confidence in what we know, and at times find it hard to recognise the value of what we do. I was therefore delighted when in 2004 I came across an advert for the Institute for Learning (IfL). Finally there was an organisation that was going to provide not only recognition for what we did, but also a much needed professional identity and space for those working in the Lifelong Learning sector.

It was the creation of the IfL that initiated the debate about the professional credentials of FE teachers and tutors and it was in the wake of its demise that the debate moved to new grounds. Very early on the IfL had formulated the concept of the dual professional; marrying the vocational expertise of FE teachers with their role as educators. But that wasn't enough as it became clear that our professionalism was influenced by far more that was outside our control. To be a professional one also had to have autonomy, authority and voice. Three aspects that had been eroded over many years. It was that discussion about the erosion of our professionalism and the search for a new vision that were the genesis of the book. At a UCU symposium on FE professionalism several of us met to debate just what made us professionals. The result was a proposal to take the debate to a wider audience. We had complained about the lack of voice; now was our chance to speak out. The idea for the book 'Further education and The Twelve Dancing Princesses' was born.

For those who are yet to read the book, let me explain the title. It was the idea of two colleagues from City of Liverpool College who felt that to call FE the Cinderella of education denigrated its achievements and denied the agency of its practitioners. They suggested that the story of the twelve dancing princesses was a more fitting metaphor for the sector and its teachers. Imprisoned by the king in their room, nevertheless the princesses manage to get out and dance all night and be back in their locked room in the morning with the king always finding their dancing shoes worn out yet never figuring out how they managed to escape and dance all night.

It was the perfect metaphor to represent the agency and creativity in the sector. Here were teachers and some middle managers seemingly complying with stringent constraints, yet managing to subvert most of them in their daily practice, and still go out and teach brilliantly and do the best for their students. The editors decided to seek twelve perspectives on what makes for a professional identity in FE.

Though delighted to be a contributor to the book, I was also very apprehensive. I questioned whether what I had to say was worth saying. Perhaps that's the single weakest aspect of our role as teachers. The loss of confidence in our own voice. When we do speak, it seems it's mainly to reiterate imposed orthodoxies or bemoan the state of affairs we've got to. Yet there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise gained from what we do every day that is worth talking about.

Our classrooms are at the cutting edge of research though we may not even realise it. I am not talking necessarily about technological innovations and the latest whiteboard software, but the routine interactions and the myriad decisions we make on a daily basis as teachers that within them carry elements of pedagogical insights, if only we were to step back, and analyse them. We take it for granted as a routine feature of our practice that we know what we are doing, yet if we were to take time and examine what we do and the whys and hows we would find that we are creating educational theory through our practice.

Pedagogy is not the only important aspect of our work that we can talk about. Key to what we do are the values that permeate our practice, they are the crucial core of teaching and learning. Yet we have long allowed others external to our profession to dictate these values to us and have accepted as orthodoxies highly contested concepts such as employability, literacy, even what it is to be a professional. In my view this is a much neglected and fundamental area where we need to recover not only our voice but also our ideas. And this will only happen through wider debate within our own circles.

Contributing to the book 'FE & the Twelve Dancing Princesses' was for me about joining that debate, especially around the values of an independent and autonomous profession. Other contributors chose different angles. There are chapters on critical pedagogy, managerial resistance, the fight for ESOL, and even bungee jumping! The book reads like a multi-layered professional dialogue between practitioners discussing and exploring what we do in the light of the values and principles of our profession.

But that is not the only story we have to tell. There are myriad other tales waiting to be told, if only we would recover our voices and the delight in telling these stories. We don't need to call it research, or be apprehensive of whether it meets 'academic' expectations. It is enough that we realise that as teachers it is incumbent on us to uphold the fundamental principle of our profession. Our voice can only come from debating what we do, how we do it and why. It is in these conversations that we will once again assert our authority and autonomy.

Adult Language Education and Migration: Challenging Agendas in Policy and Practice

Edited by: James Simpson and Anne Whiteside

Cost: £39.99

Publisher: Routledge

Pages: 272

ISBN 978-0415733601

Reviewed by Sam Duncan

*Sam Duncan is an adult literacy teacher and teacher educator living and working in London. She is the author of *Reading Circles, Novels and Adult Reading Development* (2012) and *Reading for Pleasure and Reading Circles for Adult Emergent Readers* (2014). You can contact her on s.duncan@ioe.ac.uk.*

I have read every chapter in this collection, some twice. This is a very important book, one which captures the key challenges and debates within adult language education, with a specific focus on migration, in the twenty-first century. Not least is the ongoing and now, in the event of a mass migration movement in Europe, pertinent question of why integration is only seen as part of a 'broad neo-liberal agenda... sweeping the countries that are represented in this book, and others like them.'

It provides an international, comparative examination, covering Australia, Canada, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, the UK and the USA. For each of these national contexts, there is a chapter with a practice focus and a chapter with a policy focus. The teaching, research and policy experience of the contributors is equally impressive. This means that Adult Language Education and Migration should be 'required reading' for all those studying to be adult language teachers, as well as more experienced teachers and those organising or managing provision. It should also be set as homework for those writing about language and migration in our national presses (not to mention our politicians).

The chapters which stand out for any one reader will probably depend on a mixture of gaps in previous knowledge and specific areas of interest. I was fascinated by the two chapters from France, presenting quite different perspectives on linguistic diversity and what we might think of as 'community cohesion'. I also read the Irish chapters with great interest, unable to stop thinking about what was similar to my own context (in London) and what so very different – and, actually, the same applies to my reading of all the chapters.

There are explorations of innovative practice, policy challenges, examinations of multilingualism and plurilingualism, and analyses of 'integration', inclusion and citizenship. The emphasis is particularly on the motives of learners and what they bring to language learning from their own life experiences. For example, Intke-Hernandez from Sweden describes how over two years a group of local mothers and migrant mothers together developed a routine where the children's activities were central to their gatherings. Finnish was learned because they needed it for everyday purposes, not for the sake of the language itself (123).

And Mathis, using a social practices framework, reports on university students in France who used plurilingual skills in a creative writing workshop to explore the multiple identities that their various languages and dialects of languages had enriched them with (138).

The 'Introduction' and 'Afterword' perform a framing function, highlighting significant themes, issues or tensions running across the chapters, such as ESOL policies in Quebec, Ireland and the Netherlands (49, 149 & 173), not to mention Britain (Simpson, p200); and inaccessible ICT demands on migrants (187). Simpson has written a particularly poignant chapter which brings into one place all the 'anomalies, inconsistencies, unhelpful restrictions' in post-war ESOL in the UK (205). The 'Introduction' and 'Afterword' also work well as on their own, as powerful 'state of play' reflections on adult language teaching in 2015. But I challenge anyone to read them without wanting to read all the chapters in between.

Landscapes of Specific Literacies in Contemporary Society: Exploring a Social Model of Literacy

Edited by: Vicky Duckworth and Gordon Ade-Ojo

Contributors: David Barton, Lynn Coleman, John Crawford, Mary Hamilton, Mark Hepworth, Mary R. Lea and Guy Merchant

Cost: £95.00

Publisher: Routledge

Pages: 126

ISBN: 9780415741248

Reviewed by Sarah Freeman

Sarah Freeman is RaPAL's Reviews Editor.

Adult education in the UK has recently been depleted of funding after cuts by the previous Coalition government and the present conservative majority in power. One of the first cuts announced after the election was to adult learning, the bulk of remaining funding being directed to 16-19 year olds in Further Education (Wolf, 2015). Adult literacy provision, for Entry level students in particular, is one of the casualties. It has been vanishing across boroughs, prisons and family learning sites before this practitioner's eyes for the past three years.

It is therefore refreshing to find a volume devoted to the future of adult literacy. The key principle is stated in the introduction: 'perceptions of literacy must take into account the social nature of literacy which must therefore be seen as a social practice' (4). Here are eight chapters that provide commentary on what alternative possibilities are for literacy and which make constructive, well-researched suggestions about introducing future programmes that perceive literacy as a social practice.

Ade-Ojo explains that a functional curriculum of social literacy that empowers (11) can be established only through the vocational needs that the students themselves have a real need for – 'learning for specific purposes' (LSP). Through practising subjects for real which they are drawn to, learners can begin to engage with the literacy involved in that subject. As a reviewer's aside, there is a direct comparison to be made here with embedding literacy into a particular subject area which has been explored and resourced by former government education projects (Excellence Gateway). While post-16 teachers are trained to embed, the difficulty is there is little funding for extra embedded classes, which means that many teachers know little about literacy. Ade-Ojo's view of learners' disengagement with the dominant, autonomous model of literacy education is finely complimented by the findings in Duckworth's study of the identities of sixteen literacy learners, shaped by class and gender. Duckworth advocates greater negotiation between learners and their educators, developing their sense of agency through dialogue and caring (42-43).

Hamilton (to whom this volume is dedicated) outlines the negative impact that 'large scale testing and assessment of literacy' (47) has on provision and policy. What is different is that she turns the purpose of the survey industry on its head, suggesting that international research should instead be about constructing pedagogy and curriculum with adult learners, and international collaboration should concentrate on diversifying, borrowing good practice instead of standardization and narrowing of education (58).

The following four chapters cover Academic literacies (Coleman & Lea), 'Information literacy in the workplace' (Hepworth), 'Repurposing information literacy' (Crawford) and 'How mobile literacies are changing childhood' (Merchant). Written in sequence like that one can see how the chapters evolve from the opening emphasis upon bringing the literacy learning to the real-life training situation, through multi-modal forms of literacy, to another massively important point: that the IT and digital revolutions in generating literacy are simply not being employed in a relevant way to education. Crawford describes that information literacy isn't written into education plans enough (99); and Merchant observes that becoming literate is about digital literacies in everyday lives, yet there is still a predominantly 'return to the basic skills' agenda. If educators

focused on how people are naturally relating to literacy in their everyday lives, they might notice better 'the place of new technology in the ecology of meaning-making' (113-114).

Barton's 'Afterword' is a luxury summary that not many academic compilations enjoy. Here is one of the original and most articulate proponents of New Literacy Studies (NLS) summing up the value of a book tailored to 2015 adult education conditions within an NLS framework. This is what gives this book the potential to excite. Not only does the conceptual idea of the three 'p's mentioned as the 'trinity' (1) of perceptions/theory, policy and practice appeal to Barton, but he adds (120) a further four 'p's used in the book – pedagogy, participation, power and purposes. One senses the dynamism that underlies the work of the editors and contributors and it is impossible not to turn to this book if you are keen to find out how adult literacy might be revitalised.

Stories of Resilience

Tara Furlong

Tara Furlong is RaPAL's Webweaver.

We have been receiving amazing stories of adults' learner journeys as part of our joint project with ACAL (Australian Council for Adult Literacy) and with support from our respective Adult Learners Weeks. The final deadline for this co-publication has been extended to 30th April 2016, and we encourage tutors and learners to continue to send us their stories. See the [RaPAL website](#) for more information.

We have selected four to share with you in this issue of the journal: Terry Easter, Rubina Bhatti, Clare Miles' of older learners, and Denise Hodgson. With that introduction, I will let them tell their stories in their own words.

Terry Easter



My Name is Terry Easter. I am 53 years of age and I work for Thames Reach as a support worker. Thames Reach is a homeless charity which has projects over the south of England including hostels, supported housing and an employment academy. It also offers a floating support service to continue to support service users when they have moved into independent accommodation.

Four years ago I was living in supported housing which was run by Southwark council after years of living rough on the streets of London and in various short stay hostels. I found myself in this position after a long period of alcohol abuse. I left school at the age of 15 without any qualifications. Finding work was a lot easier when I

left school than it is today. When I was in supported housing I was introduced to Maggie Sandy who is a resettlement officer at Southwark council and I began working with alcohol misuse workers and went into residential detox. When I returned from detox I needed to do something meaningful to help me stay sober and try to move on with my life. I applied to take a peer mentor course with New Direction which is an alcohol and substance misuse service.

After being clean for six months I was accepted to take the course which ran for three months and I attended four days a week. Not only did this keep me occupied, it gave me the confidence to engage more and helped with my future learning as there was a lot of written work to be completed. If I am honest, I was surprised to pass the course and I was allocated a voluntary placement with New Direction which I enjoyed. Looking back, it provided me with the confidence and experience to move forward with my continued learning. Maggie Sandy told me about Thames Reach as she was previously employed by them and gave me the details of the apprenticeship scheme they run. She encouraged me to apply and helped me with the application and provided me with a reference. I had my doubts about applying especially when I learnt I would have to attend college once a week for a year and gain a qualification as I had not been in a classroom since I was fourteen, other than the peer mentor course, which was pretty laid back and did not involve using a computer, which I was very apprehensive about as I had never been near a computer in my life.

Again I was surprised when I was interviewed for the apprenticeship scheme and was successful but I still had apprehensions about attending college as I thought at my age it was much too late. But with much encouragement from Maggie Sandy and the tutor at City Lit College, Lucy Robson, I decided to give it my best and see what happened. I have to admit I was not very hopeful of being successful in gaining the qualification needed to obtain employment. I had plenty of life experience but the thought of being in a classroom and using a computer was daunting. I cannot praise Lucy Robson enough. She showed great patience with me and when I became frustrated as I thought I was not coping, she assured me I was doing ok and took time to discuss any problems I was having.

I started to meet with some of the other students of a weekend and we went over the assignments we were set.

They also helped me with learning around the computer. I found I was really enjoying learning and using a computer which was something I honestly thought I would never say. I managed to pass the apprenticeship and gain additional qualifications in Health and Social Care, as well as English and maths, which I would never have thought possible. Going to college and learning was one of the best decisions I ever made. It was enjoyable and has given me the confidence and attitude to try anything. I now know that age is no barrier to learning. I also feel my voluntary work with New Direction was a great starting point and would recommend voluntary work for anyone thinking of a change as it is a great way of gaining experience.

Listen to an audio interview with Terry [here](#).

Rubina Bhatti



I am Rubina Bhatti originally from Lahore, Pakistan. I belong to a lower middle class family with strong morals. We are four sisters and one brother. We all were very bright academically. I was only eight when sudden death of our father left us in great financial crisis along with several other problems. When I finished school I got 18th position in the whole district but it could not prolong my life as a student and I had to stop my studies because of financial problems.

In 2000, when I came to England to live with my husband I hoped to resume my studies and pass my driving test to settle in England in a proper way. I had big dreams and also the zeal to match them but nature had different plans for me.

After a month of my arrival I got pregnant. It proved a difficult pregnancy and to make things worse I was supposed to do all the housework in a house of 8 family members. Anyway my first baby was born and then only two and a half months later I was expecting

again. My miserable condition led me to believe that I might never be able to fulfil my dreams of further education and an independent life. Lost in raising my children and looking after the family I was oblivious to my own existence. That isolation from the external world sucked even the last drop of my self-confidence. Then almost six years later I had my third son. He was diagnosed with speech problem when he started nursery.

One day I got a call from my son's school if I was interested in joining a Family Learning Language Course as even at the age of four and a half he would scarcely say a word. I accepted that offer in a hope it might enable me to improve his speech and studies. That was how God put me back on the path of learning almost 15 years later.

It proved a great experience for me and my family. During that course I learnt so much about the UK. It was like I never knew this country before. I learnt about the education system which changed my approach towards my children's learning. Sulaima, my youngest son was doing much better in class in every aspect. His growing confidence made me feel proud of my decision to join the course. I started helping my other two sons in their learning as well which improved their grades at school. I helped my middle son in preparing for the entry tests for Reigate Grammar School on my own as I could not afford the private tuition fees. When he passed the test I felt like I had passed. Those were the things which helped me regain my confidence and inspired me to keep up with my adult learner life.

After passing the reading module of a Level 1 Functional Skills English qualification, I did another Family Learning course and passed the writing and speaking exams to get the full Functional Skills English qualification. At the same time, I did three other courses with WEA which included Microsoft Word Skills, Helping in Schools Level 1 and 2. At the moment I am doing GCSE Maths and English (higher tier so I can help my older sons to prepare for their GCSEs from next year.

For the last two and a half years I am volunteering in my little son's school. I am also doing a job as a crèche worker in the same school and hoping to get a job as a Teaching Assistant. My life is even busier now as I have to manage

everything alongside my studies and work myself. After putting my children to bed I start doing my college work and usually stay awake until 2 o'clock at night. In 2013, my family learning course class teacher nominated me for the Adult Learner Award 2014. Thus on 10th of June 2014 at London Canal Museum I experienced one of the most proud moments of my life when I received an individual award for South East Learning in Families and Communities. I went there with two of my sons and my husband. In that ceremony we were surrounded by some amazing real life heroes. Their heart touching stories brought tears to our eyes and made us feel humbled and privileged. On our way back home my husband told me that it was the best event of his life. I advised my children if those people could achieve what they struggled for despite all difficulties and disabilities then you should have no excuse to not excel in life ahead. Since that day I have witnessed that they have been more serious in their attitude towards studies and life in general.

My husband doesn't get tired saying how I and that evening have inspired him to do something good in life. He had finished his studies after GCSE as he was never interested in academics but after that event he applied for a crash course as a Gas Safety Engineer. Amazingly within four months he has become an engineer. We both are trying to pass our driving test and planning to do some more courses in the future. My husband very proudly says we are a learner family. That event had such an inspirational atmosphere to it that we still talk about it and get motivation in our lives.

In the end I would like to say that we all get only one chance to live in this world. Some live to inspire others but most of us get inspiration to live it. It is not important which category we fall in to but whether we are bringing the best out of it or not. We are born as students until death. So we should never let anything come in our way to success and betterment. I firmly believe that a healthy action originates from a healthy and positive thinking mind and that is the most essential thing to make this world a beautiful and peaceful place to live.

Watch a video with Rubina [here](#) and [here](#)



Clare Miles

Clare Miles is a domiciliary care co-ordinator in the community with [Learning for the Fourth Age](#), who is sharing some anonymised life-long learning case studies. As well as developing and maintaining basic literacies, these stories demonstrate the high therapeutic and practical value of drawing on sophisticated and applied literacies skills acquired over the life course to maintain quality of life while in supported living.

Painting and drawing paired with speaking and listening and diary management

D was referred for support after a diagnosis of early dementia. She lived on her own and had been an artist. The brief was to find a volunteer to enable her to continue enjoying her hobby and give her purpose and distraction during the day. The care co-ordinator, Clare Miles, visited and was able to hear all about the things she enjoyed doing and see some of her paintings, as well as to talk to her son, who was D's main carer. They were able to talk

about the other groups and help that was already being accessed to ensure that this was complimented and not replicated or clashed with. The situation at home was assessed in terms of how a volunteer would enter, keep safe, inform the family and other carers of the visit, and any problems could be reported. A communication book calendar was set up to make this easier and to give D a reference and reminder for who would visit when. A volunteer was sought who would be able to cope with these different challenges and understand D's condition.

Working with D has been a hugely moving experience as her passion and progress have grown and developed despite her health setbacks. D did not remember who was visiting each week but quickly associated them with painting. D re-found all her old painting equipment over a number of weeks with help from her family. Having not painted for a while, D really enjoyed talking about her art, remembering the jobs she had had, recalling paintings and holidays, discussing styles and materials and even finishing off unfinished paintings.

After just five weekly sessions, D fell and consequently ended up in hospital and was then moved into a care home. Her box of paints and art materials went with her and we simply continued the sessions in the home. D is very comfortable painting once started on a picture and after 6-7 sessions was keen to carry on without support at the end of the session so we left her painting things out and she enjoyed demonstrating and talking to staff and residents about what she was doing.

Being able to bring this kind of continuity of a completely individualised provision to D in the care home setting has meant that staff and residents have really got to know D and to see what she is capable of! She is not just an elderly lady with dementia; she has skill, she has passion for her interests and she has opinions and likes and dislikes she can share and demonstrate.

D has recently had a stroke and despite this we are able to keep the continuity of visits in hospital (where appropriate). We were able to bring our existing knowledge of what she enjoys to new sessions planned around her current condition and hopefully enable her to continue enjoying art.

Computer and IT learning

H is a gentleman who referred himself to us with a very specific need. H was recently bereaved and had found himself dependent on family to do his shopping for him, which he was not happy about. He has poor mobility and lives on the 2nd floor of managed retirement apartments. Again a home assessment visit was made to find out that H was a retired headmaster with experience of coordinating a business providing one-to-one language learning for foreign government workers.

H had a laptop but did not know how to use it. He wanted to be able to use this to communicate via email with friends and family. He also wanted to be able to do online shopping so that he was independent as much as possible and not reliant on other people to do his shopping for him. He was also clear that wanted to be able to shop for whatever he wanted – not always what others thought he needed!

H worked with the Domiciliary Coordinator, and then with a volunteer, over the space of approximately six months. Over this time, he gained increasing confidence with the computer: with email and then the internet and with shopping online. By the end, he was independent with all of this – able to order groceries, books, presents for loved ones, search for interests and even start getting to grips with social media and blogs. H has also been able to use the internet to research and, for example, learned he was to receive some medals that had been recently awarded to all members of the Arctic Convoys during WW2.

This knowledge has given H a new lease of life and independence. Not only has he found that he is now able to keep in touch with family and friends, do his shopping etc., he has been given a voice and social network online and has made a firm, intergenerational friend with the volunteer, who is able to continue supporting him occasionally – even via skype.

In this case, the key observation to make for the success was the very specific skill matching of the volunteer (an IT lecturer at the university) to the learning required and a knowledge of the person we were providing the learning to. The volunteer gave weekly or session feedback regarding the progress made, the problems encountered and any challenges set so we have a record of the work done. Regular evaluation visits were also carried out every

five to six sessions to ensure that the brief was being fulfilled. The sessions received 100 out of 100 for effectiveness, value for money and the quality of the volunteer from H!

Reading Music and Reminiscence

J lives at home near her daughter who works full time. J has MS and early signs of dementia. J was a musician, piano player and teacher of music. On assessment J's daughter attended and was able to prompt J to tell me all about her career in music. At home, she has all her scores and two pianos – upright and baby grand.

J was prompted by her daughter who encouraged her to play some pieces for me. She is a very accomplished musician but J's daughter said that unless prompted she no longer plays or remembers to play and is often bored and listless at home. She is alone in the day and so the volunteer found would need to come and encourage J to play, accompany her and ask for tips and advice to give J the sense of being at work and useful.

This was a really specific challenge. Not only did the volunteer need to be an accomplished musician, but also to understand the health issues, the possible effects on J and the challenges they could present. It took us a while until a suitable volunteer was placed – a professional musician, teacher of violin but also learning piano herself. She has an interest in the effect of music on the brain, the therapeutic benefits of playing or listening to music and personal experience of caring for an older relative. She has developed a good relationship with the family and with J and they are able to play together and to challenge each other with new pieces and old favourites.

The family have now seen J playing and enjoying her music again and they always have something to listen to and to ask her about. J seems to respond very positively to the sessions now – although this took some months as the routine and volunteer needed to become familiar.

Mum likes to rehearse and is enjoying her sessions. She really responds to helping improve performance skills. It is physically and mentally demanding for her now but hopefully it's a very largely good tiredness. Mum's MS with its extra consequences although pretty stable has its good days and bad days. Fiona's visits have been a positive reminder of her talents and passion.

Working with J there are special considerations due to her inconsistent mobility. The volunteer needed to be able to understand her boundaries in terms of what she could and couldn't manage and work around these. The volunteer reports after each session regarding the learning achieved, health and wellbeing of J and any challenges faced. This enables the domiciliary coordinator to ensure that appropriate support is offered and the family informed of any problems.

This is an ongoing very positive partnership with both the volunteer and learner developing and growing in their skill and passion for music together.

Denise Hodgson



My name is Denise. I achieved Adult Senior Learner of the South West in the Adult Learners Week Awards 2010. I am now 62 years of age and still working full time at present as a lecturer at Yeovil College in Somerset.

When I was at school I was branded thick and often made to sit in the corner. At senior school the teachers treated me differently. They made me the class clown: making me read aloud, and allowing everyone to laugh when I got things wrong. One time the history teacher asked me to read aloud; we were learning about the Turks. I just wanted to melt into the ground and become invisible but even if I refused, it was made worse; I would be classified as a trouble maker. So I read starting out well. Then I read “the turkeys moved forward up the hill”: the whole class burst into laughter but I was unsure why. I would leave crying and would cry every day before history and at home into my pillow. Every time I went into history class, the teacher would put up a picture of a turkey for the whole class to laugh at.

This had huge implications for my self-esteem. I think I must have had depression as I look back now. I was at secondary school and took CSEs (Certificate of Secondary Education, as they were then) and went on to college to do catering. This was successful. Well, in the practical I got a distinction but the theory held me back. Still, no-one noticed my struggles. I worked in schools and hospitals in the kitchens for a good number of years.

I had my babies and returned to catering. The shifts were helpful. Then the worst thing happened: my husband left after 15 years of marriage. I was broken hearted, and used a lot of health and social care services. I survived a really dark time in my life. I had a 14 year old and a 2 year old to bring up.

I wanted to provide for them so I got a job in care working with older people. This was good. I liked it and soon got promoted. Things were starting to improve. I then went to work with homeless people as a resettlement officer. I learnt a lot and started my Open University journey. Just after my first assignment my tutor contacted me and said my work was really good. I clearly understood the requirement but it was extremely fragmented. She said she thought I was dyslexic and wanted to send me for an educational assessment.

Well, this took place when I was approximately 39-42. I can no longer remember, but the assessment came back and stated that I had a severe learning disability. I had no phonics. I cried a lot and was so emotional reading this account of me and then I realised why school was so hard and why I need to help others. I never stop studying. I changed jobs a few times and then I was a manager in supported housing, working alongside people with mental health issues.

From the Open University to counselling and group work, my educational pathway grew. I also trained to be a trainer and an assessor and verifier for the old NVQs. I was head hunted and became a training officer in a mental health trust. It felt strange as I still had a hard job to realise my knowledge and skills. This is still the case today.

I started work at Yeovil college approximately 10 years ago after leaving the NHS with stress. I graduated as a teacher: cap and gown affair. This is how I won the Adult learners award. Since then I have continued to study and grow. In my local community I have just become a finalist for a Pride Award in Somerset and Dorset's unsung hero. I am so very excited. The final date is this 4th December. The local housing group nominated me as an enthusiastic and inspirational teacher, for teaching older people and young people in an intergenerational project for the past five years. It is such an honour.

I am a Lecturer in Health and Social Care at college and also hold a post of teaching and learning coach. This is about supporting other lecturers to develop creative teaching and positive risk taking. I only have 2 years left to work. My sons are both grown: one with a family of his own; the other son, the youngest, has his own business and works extremely hard. My mum used to help so much with child care, both when I was working and studying, while the boys were dependant.

I was a chair of a local organisation for seven years: interesting when my history teacher said I would never succeed or come to anything. I just wish I could see his face now!

FINAL Learner Story Submission DEADLINE: 30th April 2016

The screenshot shows the RaPAL website interface for 'Stories of Resilience'. The main content area features a story titled 'Bulend Murad' by Learner Bulend, Tutor Annette. The text describes Bulend's journey from taking English literacy and numeracy classes to becoming a volunteer at Crisis Skylight and Spitalfields City Farm. A video player is visible below the text, and a 'Famous Quotes' section is on the right. The RaPAL logo is in the bottom right corner.

Why not write something for the RaPAL Journal?

We invite contributions from anyone involved in the field of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL education to write and share ideas, practice and research with RaPAL readers. This can be writing from learners, ideas linking research and practice, comments about teaching, training or observations about policy. Our journal is now produced online and so we welcome articles, reviews, reports, commentaries, images or video that will stimulate interest and discussion.

The journal is published three times a year and represents an independent space, which allows critical reflection and comment linking research with practice in the field of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL nationally and internationally.

The RaPAL network includes learners, managers, practitioners, researchers, tutors, teacher trainers, and librarians in adult, further and higher education in the UK. It also has an international membership that covers Ireland, Canada, USA, New Zealand, Australia, South America, Europe and Africa.

Guidelines for contributors

All contributions should be written in an accessible way for a wide and international readership.

- Writing should be readable, avoiding jargon. Where acronyms are used these should be clearly explained.
- Ethical guidelines should be followed particularly when writing about individuals or groups. Permission must be gained from those being represented and they should be represented fairly.
- We are interested in linking research and practice; you may have something you wish to contribute but are not sure it will fit. If this is the case, please contact the editors to discuss this.
- Writing should encourage debate and reflection, challenging dominant and taken for granted assumption about literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

We want to encourage new writers as well as those with experience and to cover a range of topics. We aim to have three different kinds of articles in the journal plus a reviews section; these are slightly different in length and focus. We welcome illustration and graphics for any of the sections and now have the facility to embed audio and video files into the journal. The journal has a different theme for each edition but we welcome general contributions too.

Below you will see more details about the different themes and topics:

1. Ideas for teaching

This section is for descriptive and reflective pieces on teaching and learning. It is a good place to have a first go at writing for publication and can be based on experiences of learners and teachers in a range of settings. Pieces can be up to 1,000 words long.

2. Developing Research and Practice

This section covers a range of contributions from research and practice. In terms of research this could be experience of practitioner research, of taking part in research projects, commenting on research findings or of trying out ideas from research in practice. In terms of practice this could be about trying out new ideas and pushing back boundaries. Contributions should include reflection and critique. Pieces for this section should be between 1,000 - 2,000 words long including references.

3. Research and Practice: multi-disciplinary perspectives

This section is for more sustained analytical pieces about research, practice or policy. The pieces will be up to 4,000 words long including references and will have refereed journal status. Although articles in this section are more theoretically and analytically developed they should nevertheless be clearly written for a general readership. Both empirical work and theoretical perspectives should be accessible and clearly explained. Writing for this section should:

- Relate to the practices of learning and teaching adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL
- Link to research by describing and analysing new research findings relating this and any critical discussion to existing research studies
- Provide critical informed analysis of the topic including reference to theoretical underpinning
- Write coherently and accessibly avoiding impenetrable language and assumed meanings. The piece should have a clear structure and layout using the Harvard referencing system and notes where applicable. All terminology should be explained, particularly for an international readership.

Reviews

Reviews and reports of books, articles and materials (including online materials) should be between 50 to 800 words long. They should clearly state the name of the piece being reviewed, the author, year of publication, name and location of publisher and cost. You should also include your name, a short 2 to 3 line biography and your contact details. You can write the review based on your experience of using the book, article or materials in your role as practitioner, teacher trainer, and researcher or as a student.

Submitting your work

1. If you are responding to a call for articles via the RaPAL email list or directly by an editor you will have been given the email address of the editor(s) for submitting your work, together with a deadline date and the theme of the journal.
2. If you are submitting a piece of work that you would like RaPAL to consider for publication that has not been written as a result of a call for articles, please send it to journal@rapal.org.uk in the first instance. The journal coordinator will then let you know what the next steps will be.
3. All contributions should have the name of the author(s), a title and contact email address and telephone number. You should also include a short 2 to 3 line biography. Sections, sub-sections and any images should be clearly indicated or labelled (further guidance on image size is on the website www.rapal.org.uk).
4. All referencing should follow the Harvard system.
5. Articles should be word processed in a sans serif font, double-spaced with clearly numbered pages.
6. The article should be sent to journal@rapal.org.uk

What happens next?

1. Editors are appointed for each edition of the journal. They review all contributions and will offer feedback, constructive comment and suggestions for developing the piece as appropriate.
2. Articles submitted for the third category 'Research and Practice: multi-disciplinary perspectives' will be peer-reviewed by an experienced academic, research or practitioner in the field in addition to being edited.
3. The editor(s) will let you know whether your article has been accepted and will send you a final copy before publication.

If you have any questions, please contact the journal coordinator by emailing journal@rapal.org.uk

and
by me
are there
our views.
organisation
literacies in adu

RaPAL is an independent
of learners, teachers,
researchers engaged in
and numeracy. Our support
by membership subscription
are therefore completely
our views. RaPAL is the
organisation focusing