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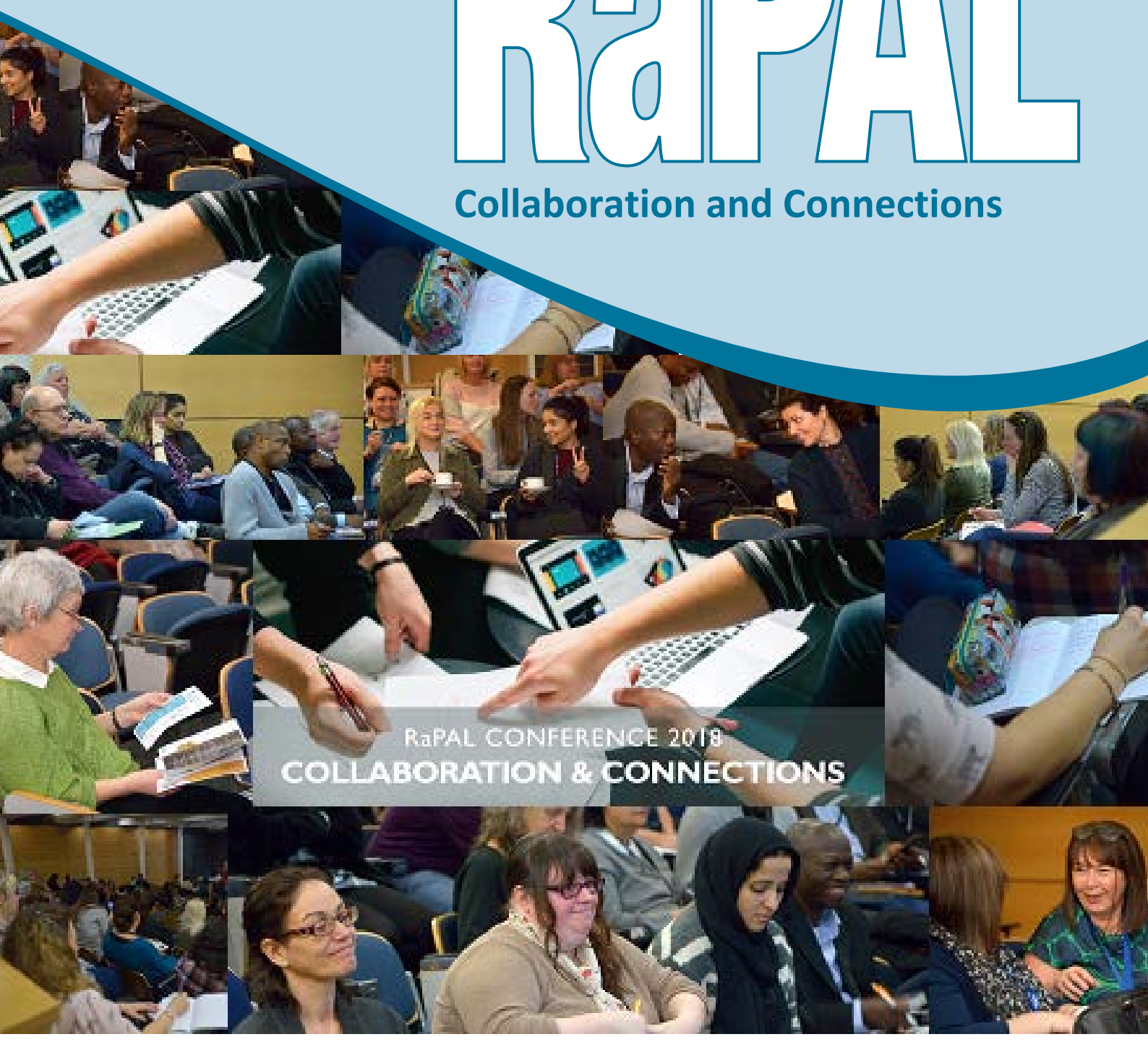
RaPAL

Collaboration and Connections



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

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Editorial Information

The editorial group for 2017-2018 includes the following researchers, practitioners and practitioner-researchers: Gwyneth Allatt, Angela Cahill, Claire Collins, Vicky Duckworth, Sarah Freeman, Tara Furlong, Toni Lambe, Sue Lownsbrough, Jonathan Mann, Juliet McCaffery, Mary-Rose Puttick, Anne Reardon-James, Yvonne Spare and Rachel Stubley.

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 literacies 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 was designed by Image Printing Company, Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbyshire

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To join, please complete the form on our website (rapal.org.uk/join-us). You can also use the form below and email it to membership@rapal.org.uk or post to: RaPAL Membership, c/o Jo Byrne, 8 Phillip Drive, Glen Parva, Leicester, LE2 9US, UK.
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Contents

Editorial

Tara Furlong and Sarah Telfer

Welcome to RAPAL Journal 96, winter 2018. A ‘makers faire’ celebrating our teaching and learning practices, Collaboration and Connections looks at how we use our English (and maths) to negotiate and build lives, and the role of educator research in making sense of managing it all. How do we reconcile curricula with our learners and contexts? What projects as individuals and teams do we manage to squeeze through and to what effect? How did we do that? How do practitioners ensure all forms of literacy are made meaningful, whilst at the same time implementing social practice approaches, addressing agency and equity, as well as integration, human fulfilment and multicultural empowerment? What more can a professional learning community add?

This edition showcases English andragogy and the research practices which underpin our work. Many of the articles are based on workshops at the RaPAL conference held at the University of Bolton last spring. We open with Talk British Values To Me, which explores the impact of social policy-making and legislation on the classroom, ESOL teacher training in this case. Dr Sarah Telfer, Associate teaching professor from the University of Bolton, asks how teachers feel about the obligation to embed BVs within their teaching. She discusses the political and educational debate devoted to the defining of ‘Britishness’ and BVs in education, questioning if teachers know how to ‘promote’ and embed such values in classrooms, questioning the concept of ‘Britishness’ and how this is problematic for both learners and teachers, who may find combinations of social policy-making, such as Brexit, BVs, Prevent, etc. uncomfortable and controversial.

How did teaching adult literacy to people with learning difficulties become special? Culminating a long career in the sector, Judith Rose is a post-graduate research student at the Institute of Education, University College London. She summarises for us an exploration of the relationship between adult literacy education and the development of education for adults with learning difficulties in England 1970-2010. The article considers the grassroots political impetus for inclusivity of learning differences that were prevalent but undefined, the challenges of matching funding to need, and of influencing policy. The role of terminology is considered, and of labels perceived as negative in creating deficit models.

This edition explores a number of key questions around the increasing forms of 'new literacies' taking shape in our practice today, not least of these being 'employment literacy'. Cormac Conway, ESOL Curriculum Manager at Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES), presents Developing Employability in ESOL Learners on the increasing focus on developing employability skills with our literacy and ESOL learners. He explores concepts of 'employability' and explains why it is vital for tutors to focus on employability skills development, while sharing some practical ideas of activities which can help increase employability skills through grammar practice.

'Models of Literacy Learning: purposes, functions and communicative practices' reports on a summer seminar organised by British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID) and hosted by School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. RAPAL's Tara Furlong reports on the rich discussions and presentations. Professor Frederike Lüpke, SOAS, who heads the Crossroads project in Senegal, presented on language independent literacy for inclusive education in multilingual areas; and Professor Leketi Makalela, Head of the Division of Languages, Literacies and Literatures, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, on the disruption and recreation of language and literacy boundaries and the implications for education. Discussion included comparing the value of past standardised systems for writing local languages in a desire for political, religious, and cultural cohesion, with rich multilingual identities, modern demands and potential for growth. To what extent does standardisation reflect the literacy practices and linguistic reality on the ground? How does language development thread through all these areas?

Literacy as Social Practice in Vocational and Professional Contexts by Tara Furlong argues that there is an absence of theorisation of literacy as social practice in commercial and industrial fields and associated expertise. She briefly discusses underpinning literacy theoretical frameworks, and the role of literacies in epistemological distinctions grounded in material conditions and contexts. Writing and presentations, for example through Functional Skills in apprenticeships, are utilised as examples. The paper concludes with suggesting 'ethnographic-type' research into the literacy practices employed in industry and commerce. This is followed by a brief overview and the slides for Tara's conference presentation, Educators' Research-Engaged Literacies Practices, which are argued to improve learning outcomes and educators' professional well-being.

The journal concludes with A Mood of Hope, a Legacy of Writing: Sue Gardner and the Community Literacy and Publishing Movement, which is a tribute compiled by Mary Hamilton with contributions from Richard Andrews, Ursula Howard, Keith Jackson, Jane Mace, Juliet McCaffery, Rebecca O'Rourke, Judd Stone, and Alan Tuckett. Sue Gardner was a key literacy practitioner and early RaPAL supporter, who made an important contribution to the community publishing movement. She dedicated a lifetime to developing collaborative practice, advocacy of 'cultural literacy action' in forms of writing, and the championing of creative expression in adult literacy practice.

Finally, Vera Hutchinson reviews Global Conversations in Literacy Research: Digital and Critical Literacies, edited by Peggy Albers. The 15 chapters offer an international set of critical exchanges about literacy theory, practice and learning in context. Themes include language, power, identity, multilingual literacies, digital tools, formal and informal learning, and assessment… and 'mobile' babies and toddlers. The book connects readers to further online resources by the authors, and communities of practice.

Collaboration and Connections seeks to discuss some of the issues that arise from both new and old forms of literacy and explores how they fit into the cultural and linguistic landscapes of literacy learning today. We hope you enjoy reading this edition and that it engages you in reflection on the importance of collaborative practice and engages you in the questioning of 'past and present' literacies.

Note from the Journal Coordinator

Yvonne Spare

Yvonne can be contacted on journal@rapal.org.uk

Hello fellow RaPAL members

We hope you enjoy this, our winter edition of the Journal. Our next edition will be based on our November joint conference '**Re-thinking Participation**'. If you have any thoughts on articles that you would like to see in this edition, now is the time to let us know.

Any comments about this or other editions, or ideas for future content can be sent to journal@rapal.org.uk and don't forget that most Journal editions contain articles by new writers. There are guidelines on our website on the Write for Us page and we offer as much support as you feel you need. We are also interested in hearing what you think about your Journal. There is 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 the password that has been circulated with this edition. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Yvonne

Talk British Values to Me

Dr Sarah Telfer

Sarah Telfer is Operational Lead for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) at the University of Bolton and an Associate TIRI (Teaching Intensive Research Informed) professor. Sarah can be contacted on S.Telfer@bolton.ac.uk

Debate around British values

There is a great deal of political and educational debate around the UK government's Prevent policy and the legal requirements that teachers should include 'British Values' in the delivery of classes in schools and colleges (Bowcott, The Guardian, 2016). This debate started to gain momentum in November 2014 when the UK government created a new educational policy decreeing that all teachers would now be required to 'actively promote fundamental British values' (BVs) (Department for Education (DfE), 2014:3). This policy was created as an aspect of the government's counter-terrorism 'Prevent' strategy, with the intention of averting the threat of radicalisation amongst young people (Janmaat, 2018). The government policy 'Prevent' (2015) resulted in the obligation for teachers to promote BVs in all educational institutions and the Department for Education published guidance on how BVs must ensure young people left education prepared for life in 'modern Britain'.

According to Ofsted, 'fundamental British values' are:

- democracy.
- the rule of law.
- individual liberty.
- mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith

(Ofsted, 2015)

In addition, BVs were incorporated into the teaching standards, becoming a feature of the Ofsted inspections framework (Panjwani, 2016; Janmaat, 2018). There has been much criticism of this policy across professional teaching circles as well as within academia (Janmaat, 2018). Tomlinson (2015) disparages the portrayal of the values as something fundamentally British, asserting that such an instigation was inappropriate and would likely lead to the alienation of certain ethnic minorities. Smith (2016) adds that the policy might prompt teachers to avoid open discussions of current social and political issues in class due to the oppressive and fearful atmosphere such a policy engendered. However, some educationalists might argue that BVs offer a positive response to radicalisation and extremism, counteracting and impacting on 'isolationist' or non-English-speaking communities, whilst embracing the diverse cultures that are present in schools and colleges (Lebor, 2018).

Pilot study research on British values in the ESOL classroom

Government policies such as 'Prevent' and BVs are pan-sectoral, but this paper is based in an adult education context. The aim of the pilot study presented here was to explore BVs regarding the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classroom in Further Education (FE), and to examine how trainee ESOL teachers feel about embedding BVs into their everyday classroom practice. The objectives of the pilot study were to examine what trainee ESOL teachers said about BVs and how they perceive such policies impact on their ESOL learners and their classroom delivery.

All ESOL teaching practitioners must now undergo 'Prevent' training as part of their professional development programme. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) training programmes are required to include lectures on BVs and to advise trainees how best to embed BVs into everyday lesson plans and schemes of work. The teaching standards require teachers not just to avoid undermining BVs, but to actively promote them under DfE guidelines (DfE 2012, 2015).

This research pilot study was conducted with a small group of seven trainee ESOL teachers coming from of a variety of different ethnic minorities, some of whom had grown up in Britain, and some of whom had moved to Britain from other countries and for whom English not their first language. The purpose of the pilot study was to engage the trainee ESOL teachers in discussion and debate on BVs and to elicit their personal views and ethical standpoints on the impact of government policy on their teaching and classroom practice, given the possible contentious nature of embedding 'Britification' (Lebor,2018) into language teaching. It also analysed the trainee ESOL teachers' views on the impact that policies such as BREXIT, Prevent and BVs have on the ESOL classroom and ESOL learners.

The trainees were given a questionnaire which contained the following seven questions:

1. What do you understand by the term BREXIT?
2. Can you summarise the 'Prevent' Policy?
3. Have you had 'Prevent' training?
4. What do you understand by the term British Values?
5. How do you embed 'British Values' into your ESOL teaching?
6. How do you think BREXIT, Prevent and British Values have impacted and will impact on ESOL Education?
7. What implications do you think post BREXIT has for the ESOL classroom and ESOL Learners?

Participants were invited to write their definitions of key words such as: BREXIT, Prevent and British Values, with the aim of examining trainee teachers' perceptions, definitions and understanding of these terms. The completed questionnaires were followed up by conducting two focus groups with teachers, to gain more explanation, discussion and clarification of responses to the seven key questions.

Analysis of trainee teachers' responses

The people of Britain voted for a British exit from the EU in a historic referendum on Thursday June 23rd in 2016. This political decision has set in motion social, political and economic impacts on the UK and has created what might be described as an emotive, bewildering and possibly threatening environment for ESOL learners, to which ESOL teachers may need to act as a 'social bridge' to understanding. This pedagogical impact may also be in the context of teachers' own 'ambiguous or negative attitudes towards these issues (Lebor, 2018).

To contextualise the current political climate, analysis of responses to the question 'What do you understand by the term BREXIT?' indicated that trainees had a clear fundamental understanding of the meaning of BREXIT. Some negative views regarding BREXIT were reflected in the trainee teachers' responses to question 1, with one trainee stating that the word Brexit 'brings to my mind racist, xenophobic, small mindedness connotations which makes me feel uncomfortable and worried for our future'. This response suggested that ESOL trainee teachers' connotations of BREXIT are linked to issues around immigration, racism and xenophobia in both a political and educational arena.

Prevent

Questions 2 and 3 invited discussion around the controversial Prevent policy. David Anderson QC, the independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, suggests the implementation of the 'Prevent' strategy has stifled debate and left teachers feeling vulnerable to confronting radicalisation (The Guardian, 2016). Despite such views, 'Prevent' training is now compulsory within all educational sectors. The aim of the agenda focuses on the safeguarding of learners and the prevention of individuals being drawn into radicalisation or extremism. Interestingly, one trainee noted that in her college 'most training is for safeguarding rather than British values', indicating that she did not see the connection between the two.

Six out of seven of the trainee teachers had received training delivered either on-line or face-to-face. However, during focus groups, teachers described the on-line training as a 'tick box' exercise and suggested that face-to-face training would provide more opportunity for debate and discussion around the practical implementation of the policy. This indicates that although such training might educate teachers on the general premise of the policy, they are not clear on how to embed such policy into their classroom practice. This suggests a need for trainee teachers to engage in dialogue around how to implement BVs into their daily pedagogic practice.

It was clear that the trainee teachers had a clear understanding of the 'Prevent' policy, with positive responses from participants stating that the objectives were to: 'prevent terrorism and extremism, trying as teachers to identify signs' in learners, by 'recognising and identifying students' behaviour/attitude'. One teacher suggested that the purpose of 'Prevent' was 'to protect and educate people'. The more positive responses conveyed pedagogic perceptions from a positive pastoral view.

However, when summarising their understanding of the 'Prevent' strategy, most trainee teachers used emotive and negative key words such as 'terrorism, extremism and radicalisation'. One trainee suggested that the word 'Prevent' 'sounds like a warning/threat to ethnic minorities… we are looking to criminalise you before you have done anything wrong'**.** The focus groups also revealed some interesting discussion around the use of the word 'tolerance' in relation to BVs, which trainees felt had a negative connotation and suggested 'putting up with something unpleasant'. This suggests that not all teachers feel positive about the language used around such policy.

British Values

Question 4 invited debate around trainees' understanding of the term BVs.

Lebor (2018) suggests that defining BVs is a 'notoriously difficult process'. BVs are normally defined as: 'democracy', 'individual liberty', 'rule of law' and 'mutual respect'. This term BVs is a controversial issue in ESOL education regarding the reassertion of 'so called British-ness of the UK's culture and societal values' (Lebor, 2018), This might be viewed as potentially controversial in multi-lingual classes in which learners might ask if such values are exclusively 'British'? Elton-Chalcraft et al (2017) pose the question 'to promote, or not to promote fundamental BVS'. The use of the word 'promote' in the context of an educational policy could be argued to imply the selling or promotion of 'an educational product', to be advertised forcefully and 'sold' hard by teachers to learners.

In contrast to this perception, trainees' definitions of BVs described them mostly in positive terms using the following descriptions:

- Promoting values such as respecting other people's opinion, liberty to be who you are, tolerance of other faiths etc.
- British Values as a teacher means to promote the 'law'. Promote culture, social, moral, spiritual through the four elements of British Values'.
- These are the values or ideas that promote equality and democracy.
- Promoting 'values' like respect, understanding and cultural cohesion.
- Mutual respect, democracy, rule of law, tolerance and individual liberty.
- Values that need to be embedded to prevent radicalisation. Four values - respect and tolerance, liberty, rule of law and democracy.

However, some teachers questioned if these terms were 'really a true reflection of 'British' values', asking if 'these things are specifically British?'. This is an interesting pedagogic question to pose, as it could be suggested that such values are international ones all citizens should uphold. Indeed, Tomlinson (2015) suggests a democratic context would consider how BVs are different say from French, German, or Indian values. In the focus groups, the teachers put forward the alternative term of 'Human Values'. It was also thought-provoking to note that one trainee revealed that the FE college where she was teaching used the term 'college values' and did not refer to BVs at all. This was a deliberate college-wide policy due to the diverse nature of ethnic minorities attending

the college, indicating that not all colleges chose to use the term BVs, preferring to use more generic language.

Embedding British Values into teaching and learning

Question 5 invited discussion surrounding the embedding of BVs into teaching and learning. Elton-Chalcraft et al (2016) question whether teachers know how to promote such values or know how to communicate them in their classrooms. The trainee teachers referred to the emphasis on their educational institutions 'being seen' to actively promote BVs as part of college life, with BVs being displayed on TV screens and posters in the classroom. When discussing how they embedded BVS into their ESOL teaching, trainees described using diverse pictures of different ethnic minorities in classes and promoting equal opportunities for learners to give their opinions during discussions. It was suggested that BVs was implemented by placing emphasis on 'turn taking' during class discussions, by tutors encouraging learners to listen to each other and to respect each other's points of view. Trainees made reference to their ESOL learners' diverse cultures and religious beliefs, and the importance of ensuring that everyone had 'a voice' in the classroom, allowing learners to speak freely so they were aware of other's ideas.

One trainee felt it was important for his ESOL learners to be 'aware of the repercussions of negative actions' which could refer to inappropriate responses to sensitive topics, which might be construed as offensive. Another trainee teacher suggested BVs should embed 'modern British issues such as LGBT and workers' rights**',** indicating it was important to include 'different 'values. This suggests a base exists in some established practice, on which ESOL teachers can build, encouraging discussion around more controversial subject areas for new ESOL learners to the UK.

Further positive impacts were identified in making ESOL learners more aware of UK governance and engaging them in British politics. Trainees felt this encouraged ESOL learners to 'appreciate the values, opportunities and culture of mutual respect of this country', bringing 'an awareness to issues of respect, tolerance, freedom etc.'.

Perceptions of the future

Questions 6 and 7 invited discussion on teachers' views regarding how BREXIT, 'Prevent' and British Values have impacted and will impact on ESOL Education in the future. The aim of these questions was to identify their feelings around possible implications for their ESOL classroom and ESOL learners.

Positive responses indicated that the policies:

- make students more politically aware
- help them appreciate the values, opportunities and culture of mutual respect of this country
- bring an awareness to issues of respect, tolerance, freedom etc.
- discuss what values they have-involve a great discussion.

The most positive response suggested that BVs would:
'definitely will make learners more aware of how the country is being governed… Likely to make them interested in politics - meaning how to vote, but most of all will hopefully help them appreciate the values, opportunities and culture of mutual respect of this country.'

Negative impacts identified by trainee teachers suggested that BREXIT had worried and alienated some ESOL learners making them feel segregated not integrated, with some ESOL students fearful of their futures in Britain due to the 'uncertainty' that BREXIT had brought. There was clear concern around 'Prevent' and BVs fueling racism and anti-immigrant feeling towards their ESOL learners, with trainees referring to 'British first patriotism'**.** Discussion around the 'Prevent' policy indicated that some trainees felt that it 'seems to stereotype people and create a negative image'. This view was made in relation to public conceptions of Muslim communities in the UK and this feeling was supported by another trainee who felt that 'BVs can alienate learners…the population who will not treat learners with respect'.

Significantly, questions 6 and 7 elicited the most emotive and detailed responses from the trainee teachers in relation to ESOL learners' perceptions and the 'social and cultural bridging' role of the ESOL teacher in a pedagogic context. Such a response is illustrated in the following written discourse taken from a questionnaire:

> 'It has learners feeling worried, so believe they are not wanted and are not liked. Some have even asked if ESOL will still exist because people are no longer wanted. Learners need to be taught and explained to about possible implications. They also need to be told about the attitude of people - that they are not disliked.'

Teachers also expressed concerns that BVs 'may compound racism and increase ignorance of cultures which are not British' and that 'ESOL learners will enter the classroom with a feeling they are not welcome in the community.

> 'Already I have noticed learners seem unsettled by BREXIT - especially as many of them have citizenship of other countries, even those born in Africa or the Middle East. Now that an anti-immigration stance is accepted as mainstream after the referendum, ESOL learners feel unwelcome for the first time.'

In summary, trainees expressed concerns that their ESOL learners felt worried about anti-immigrant prejudice and unwelcome responses from British citizens in the community and colleges, 'leading to further segregation and preventing naturalistic language learning'**.** Trainees also expressed political concerns around the possible negative impact that BREXIT might have if freedom of movement around the EU is restricted, resulting in smaller ESOL classes due to fewer EU students. Economic concerns were expressed regarding further government cuts to ESOL provision and ESOL funding, with apprehension around lack of teaching resources, fewer support workers and limited spaces in the classroom due to reduced ESOL provision. One ESOL teacher suggested that English language classes for asylum seekers and refugees were 'not really seen as a vote winner amongst BREXIT

supporters'. This would seem to indicate anxiety from teachers in the light of government responses to political pressure and unfavourable public perceptions of educational funding for ESOL learners, especially in comparison to lack of funding provided for UK citizens.

Conclusion of the pilot study findings

It is worth reflecting that BVs are perhaps a concept that ESOL teachers have been already embedding for some time in their English classes, but under the banner of 'citizenship'. It could also be argued therefore that learning such values are the reason why ESOL learners attend classes at college. However, it is clear from the pilot study that some pan-sectoral tensions and concerns are evident, and these perhaps have more resonance and impact on the groups of adult ESOL learners that teachers are likely be teaching. How do trainee teachers deal with the tensions presented to them for resolution within their practice? The main recommendation might be to reflect on how BVs can be broadened to be more inclusive of ESOL learners, and to consider terminology that better reflects the values of all faith communities in Britain.

Findings from this pilot study support assertions made by Elton-Chalcraft et al (2016), who highlight the absence of any wider debate around the concepts surrounding BVs. The study supports the premise that embedding BVs is problematic, due to the lack of training for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Another recommendation might be to train ESOL teachers more comprehensively on practical ways to include BVs in their teaching, which are referred to in a more general 'citizenship' approach.

This pilot study suggests that teaching 'Britishness' can be problematic for both ESOL learners and ESOL teachers, some of whom find such policies uncomfortable and controversial to teach. A summary of the discussion and debate on BVs offered by the trainee teachers in this small pilot study, suggests that the trainee teachers clearly understand they are obligated to promote BVs and that they can identify some positive impacts on their teaching. However, it was evident that some trainee teachers felt uncomfortable around the rhetoric of this educational policy, feeling that aspects of 'Prevent' and BVs had the potential to isolate their ESOL learners and alienate particular ethnic minorities within their classes. Therefore, a recommendation is to provide forums for discussion on how best to deliver inclusive BVs in ESOL practice, incorporating positive perceptions of social and cultural diversity in an uncertain political and economic context.

'Values won't be assumed because teaching institutions demand they are, particularly if they're very different from those at home. They must be arrived at through mutual exploration and understanding' (DfE, 2014). Are BVs just another educational phrase for citizenship skills, which have been of part of ESOL teaching practice for many years, due to the very nature of the subject area? Values of 'citizenship' carry perhaps a more positive and palatable connotation than BVs.

To conclude, one trainee ESOL teacher asked: 'Do we have to use the term BV? Or do we just have to embed the ethos? Language used can be off-putting'.

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“RaPAL wish to clarify that the articles we publish are not necessarily representative of the views or position of the membership body, and we do not advocate any given course of action in any given context. We do, of course, support freedom of speech and of academic liberty, and the pragmatic achievement of objectives as a negotiated consensus.

For those looking for practical support with Prevent, for example, the Education and Training Foundation have a suite of resources offered here https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/prevent-2/ The current OFSTED practice is reportedly to ask learners individually about their understanding of "British Values".

We would be delighted to hear from members on curriculum and andragogy which integrate British Values into their adult literacies teaching and learning. Similarly, we welcome work on researching vocation- or profession- specific literacies and embedding them into andragogy as per the final pieces in this edition, and any other matters members would like to see published according to our editorial guidelines.”

How did teaching adult literacy to people with learning difficulties become 'special'? An exploration of the relationship between adult literacy education and the development of education for adults with learning difficulties in England 1970-2010

Judith Rose

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Introduction

This workshop was based on the research I am doing for a PhD thesis. I wanted participants to understand that the 1970s development of adult literacy education was contemporaneous with the growth of education for people with learning difficulties, and that there was historically a dynamic relationship between the two fields. It was particularly interesting to hear the comments and contributions from the workshop participants, many of whom had experience in the area that I am studying.

My research is a historical investigation, which seeks to throw light on a topic within the adult literacy narrative which has been neglected, although it often was a significant part of the experience of people involved. It is not intended as a manual or guide to good practice. My approach is based on the idea articulated by Gary McCulloch that 'historical research can illuminate the structures and taken-for-granted assumptions of our contemporary world, by demonstrating that these have developed historically, that they were established for particular purposes that were often social, economic and political in nature, and that in many cases they are comparatively recent in their origin' (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000:5).

Historical Perspective

There has been very little written about the relationship between adult literacy education and the development of education for adults with learning difficulties. I suggest that there are two complementary explanations for this lack of documentation and comment. In the first instance the campaigners for adult literacy education in England in the 1970s were anxious to affirm that people who needed adult literacy education were 'ordinary people' with jobs and families, who were not 'educationally sub-normal' or 'mentally defective' (*Right to Read*, 1974). This position was

generally maintained by the various agencies which received and administered government funding between 1975 and 1995.

Secondly, the initial model of adult literacy education developed within the voluntary sector was based on a volunteer teaching an individual student, under the supervision of a paid organiser. Practice was student-centred and tutors often devised materials to suit the interests of their particular learner. The question of 'learning difficulties' was not addressed by funders, local organisers or teacher trainers according to the memories of those involved. At the same time many of the volunteers who took up the challenge to work in adult literacy education were fired by a sense that it was about social justice and civil rights. They were ready to accept and work with whoever came forward to learn.

Sector interviews

My research has included interviews with practitioners who worked in adult education during the period 1970-2010, which generated a rich collection of quotes. It is clear from the accounts of the people involved in teaching and managing adult literacy education in the 1970s and 1980s that they frequently encountered students with learning difficulties.

> 'I would think that at least half of them at any one time had a learning disability, a kind of cognitive…, but nothing that had a name' said one interviewee, speaking of the learners she met as a teacher and local co-ordinator for adult literacy provision in a rural LEA (Local Education Authority).
>
> A worker who had responsibility for provision in a voluntary scheme in London confirmed, 'There were students with learning difficulties in all the groups.'

Teachers spoke positively of how they were able to use the student-centred approach which they had developed within adult literacy education practice when they began to teach adults with learning difficulties.

> 'We used the same sort of methods…We did a lot of individual story-writing. A lot of writing about my life, and learning to read from something they had written. So, an awful lot of person-centred'.
>
> 'You just worked more slowly with some people, and more carefully, and with more repetition, and more tiny little things. You know, like somebody's name and address.'
>
> 'I really began to explore in much finer detail the underpinning skills in literacy development.'
>
> 'I couldn't teach them to read and write because they could do that. But they were recording their experiences, and it was quite incredible.'

Managers and co-ordinators remembered the difficulties they had encountered during the period in trying to meet the needs of all students, or to bend the rules of funders:

> 'We did write a very brief…policy for literacy classes which actually enabled us to set a limit on the number of people referred who had, you know, recognised learning difficulties, into any group, in order to try and keep the proportions in a form that was acceptable', said a 1990s County Co-ordinator, with some hesitation.
>
> 'We felt that the only way to keep the provision for people with learning disabilities was to somehow link it to Wordpower and Numberpower…. so we were trying really to wedge, to be frank, qualifications into wider ranging classes', explained a regional organiser.

Some practitioners reflected that in their experience the way that adult literacy provision worked failed to accommodate and enable people with learning difficulties:

> 'What seemed to be happening is that people were going to classes endlessly…and still failing in the literacy and numeracy', stated a teacher who taught self-advocacy to adults with learning difficulties.
>
> 'I felt working with people with learning disabilities who are adults isn't the same as working with people who are adults who may need to develop their literacy skills', said a teacher working in a London college in the 2000s.

These brief excerpts show that adult literacy provision was managed locally, and creatively, to include adults with learning difficulties. They also demonstrate that tensions about the aims and objectives of adult literacy education were present, and manifest in work with adults with learning difficulties, from early days.

Historical and legislative background

Meanwhile attitudes to disability were changing. In legislative terms the 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act ended the concept of 'ineducable children'. In 1978 the ground-breaking *Warnock Report* investigated the education of handicapped children and young people, and introduced the new ideas and language of integration and 'special educational needs'. Warnock's recommendations were implemented in the 1981 Education Act. The *Warnock Report* also criticised the patchy nature of post-school education for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. From this point in the 1980s, provision for young people with learning difficulties began to develop in Further Education (FE) colleges, and the new concept of courses and awards in independence and life skills was developed.

The 1992 Further & Higher Education Act took responsibility for post-school education away from the Local Education Authorities and created the new Further Education Funding Council. Adult literacy education (now seen as part of Basic Skills) and education for adults with learning difficulties were recognised as separate elements within the same section (Programme Area 10) by

the FEFC funding mechanism. Both were firmly located within the FE system, and essentially seen as part of vocational education. Adult literacy teachers struggled to maintain student-centred practice in a system which demanded certification and SMART targets. The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act was followed in 1996 by the FEFC report *Inclusive Learning,* which sought to move FE provision beyond 'integration' and towards 'inclusion'.

The 2001 Skills for Life strategy represented the big investment of government money which the 1970s campaigners had sought for adult literacy education, but it imposed a standard curriculum and tests. The principal aim of the government was to produce and evidence a better prepared workforce. Skills for Life also had a social inclusion agenda, which included disability. A report entitled *Freedom to Learn* was produced, which recommended measures intended to enable adult learners with disabilities and learning difficulties to access the Skills for Life programme. It was an attempt to marry the values of inclusive education to the adult literacy programme and to avoid the labels of 'special needs'. Practitioners broadly welcomed this initiative, rolled out in the training programme *Access for All*, but it did not survive the pressures to meet standard measures and to demonstrate progression to funders.

Workshop commentary and discussion

We discussed the important issue of terminology. The problem may lie partly in the collision of 'medical' diagnosis of disability and the more informal 'diagnostic' of learning differences. Some participants felt that the term 'disability' implies 'deficit', and that 'additional learning needs' is more positive. I have been using the term 'learning difficulties' because that is what was current when I was working in the field. We agreed that many practitioners in education today would refer to 'learning disabilities' to describe the range of issues faced by the group of learners under discussion. At the same time, I want to distinguish the people who have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or a diagnosis of autism from adults who have what some authorities call 'global learning difficulties' (Duncan, 2010: p331-342), or 'intellectual disabilities' (AAIDD web-site)[1]. I am focusing on how adult literacy education worked historically with this significant student group. The question is further complicated by the concepts of 'severe' or 'moderate' learning difficulties, and how these might be related to funding, and to the support available to teachers in the field.

It was agreed by the workshop participants that the question of terminology is a complex one, and that the principle which practitioners in education try to abide by is to use terminology which respects the students.

One contributor asked whether I had chosen 2010 as an end date because it was the date of the Equality Act. It was a perceptive question, relating to the world we operate in. Teachers must be aware of legislation, funding systems and qualification procedures as well as the social pressures on

[1] **Intellectual disability** is a **disability** characterized by significant limitations both in **intellectual** functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This **disability** originates before the age of 18. (American Association on Intellectual and Development Disabilities, accessed 5.10.18).

learners. Practitioners still have to negotiate a path which gives their students 'freedom to learn', but meets funding restrictions of time and targets. Teachers still balance their desire to help students grow individually and critically, and the requirement to offer 'functional skills'. When I spoke to students, they told me that they value the freedom of the literacy class, as a place where their voice is heard and valued.

Reflecting on my findings

It was good to look at my research with workshop participants. They generally empathised with the motivation and the dilemmas expressed by practitioners I had interviewed, and understood how learners might benefit from open-ended student-centred provision. They also appreciated that adults with learning difficulties gain something by being recognised as learners in the FE system, with the support of professional staff and the chance to achieve qualifications.

Further reading suggestions

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Developing employability skills in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners

Cormac Conway

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In March 2018 I presented some practical ideas on strategies for practising grammar and improving the employability skills of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners for RaPAL at Bolton University. This paper aims to:

- Outline the term 'employability'
- Explain why it's important for ESOL tutors to focus on employability skills development
- Demonstrate methods to help learners make connections between work done in class and improving employability skills
- Share some practical ideas of resources and activities which can help increase the employability skills of ESOL learners in a grammar practice context.

What is employability?

This paper defines employability as:

> A set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.
>
> (Yorke and Knight, 2006)

Within the context of ESOL these achievements can take the form of qualifications recognised by employers as a valid measure of a learner's ability in English; finding a job, gaining a better paid job or a job with more hours; or participating in a voluntary work placement to gain work experience.

Understandings can relate to their understanding both of themselves as a potential employee; what their own skills, qualities and experience are; or to understand more about the local labour market and the requirements of local employers.

Personal attributes can relate to those qualities employers seek. Examples of these include punctuality, organisational skills, time management skills, and how learners are able to effectively demonstrate these attributes to potential employers.

Why is employability important?

There are many reasons why focussing on learners' employability skills is important. Some relate to our responsibilities as employees to do the best we can to support our organisation and relate to our duties as tutors to attempt to do the best we can to support our learners.

Pre-Entry:

Language focus: Ask for and provide personal information
Practice Opportunity: A simple job interview giving personal info

Language focus: Present simple
Practice Opportunity: Class survey on current jobs

Language focus: Names of jobs
Practice Opportunity: Pelmanism matching cards for jobs, Kahoot spelling games

Language focus: Numbers
Practice Opportunity: Counting items in a work picture/ work process

Language focus: Food/ shopping
Practice Opportunity: Role play as a shop keeper/ customer with realia

Since 2008, funding for ESOL provision has been cut by 50% (Burke, 2016). Since 2016-17, the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) will fully fund ESOL learning for eligible learners aged 19 and over who are unemployed and in receipt of certain benefits. All other eligible classroom-based adult ESOL learning is co-funded by the ESFA, meaning that the ESFA pays half of the course costs and the provider may pass on the remainder to the learner.

(House of Commons Library, 2018)

ESOL funding has reduced and is more focussed on working with the unemployed, with the role of improving English language competence to improve employability skills. This policy has focussed the minds of managers in Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) settings to ensure that future funding can be secured by demonstrating how well institutions work towards meeting the government's priorities for ESOL funding. Manchester Adult ESOL Strategy highlights the centrality of employability skill development to future ESOL delivery:

> The Manchester Adult ESOL strategy will help ensure that residents who are outside the labour market because of language and skills barriers are supported into sustained and healthy work with opportunities for in work progression.

(Manchester City Council, 2018)

Given developments in funding policy and ongoing uncertainty around how ESOL classes will be funded following the UK's scheduled departure from the EU in March 2019 (NATECLA, 2018), it seems likely that those organisations with the best track record of focusing on employability, and achieving positive employability outcomes for learners, will be the best positioned to continue to receive funding for ESOL classes.

A recent study by the University of Manchester and MAES indicates that many learners want to join classes as they recognise that their lack of English language competence is a barrier to them entering employment. Many have extensive work experience in another country and are eager to resume their career or develop the skills they need to begin a career in the UK. The report indicates that there are barriers to entering employment, with many more now unemployed in the UK than they were in their home country:

> The labour market involvement of respondents has decreased post-migration, with working population declining from 47.2% to 30.8%, and a large increase in the unemployment rate (28.2% now, as compared to 6% pre-migration). These figures suggest that there are current barriers to work for many respondents.
>
> (Vassey *et al*, 2018:32)

Entry 1
Language focus: Present simple
Practice Opportunity: Talk about daily routines for people in various jobs, hold mock telephone calls

Language focus: Forming/ answering simple yes/ no questions
Practice Opportunity: 20 questions – what's my job?

Language focus: Subject verb adverb agreement
Practice Opportunity: Talk about daily routines for people in various jobs, with extra challenge to describe how a person does something e.g. "he walks carefully, she drives slowly"

Language focus: Definite/ indefinite article
Practice Opportunity: Categorise jobs into definite/ indefinite e.g. a teacher, the Prime Minister

Language focus: Countable/ uncountable nouns
Practice Opportunity: Races between groups – list objects from a variety of workplaces and categorise e.g. chairs, some paper, a computer

Language focus: Present continuous
Practice Opportunity: Describe a photo from a work place e.g. she is talking with her boss, he is fixing the computer

Of those learners surveyed, most generally indicate significant improvement in their proficiency in English but feel much less able to use English for work purposes:

> Whilst most respondents now feel comfortable carrying out all the linguistic tasks listed, they are far less confident with regard to their ability to use English for work purposes, with less than a quarter (24.5%) selecting this option, a rise of just 17.4% on pre-migration levels, well-below the gain seen for the other advanced linguistic tasks.
>
> (Vassey *et al*, 2018:24)

These learners perceive their proficiency in English to be the main barrier to their progression in the labour market:

> By far the most commonly perceived barrier to labour market progression is English language proficiency, which was selected by almost two thirds of respondents.
>
> (Vassey *et al*, 2018:340)

In summary, learners are less employed than pre-migration, feel they are progressing most slowly in proficiency in using English for work purposes, and see their lack of English proficiency as their main barrier to labour market progression. This raises a basic question: should learners focus only on learning English until they feel competent enough to use it in a workplace situation (and many learners state this view when being interviewed about their longer-term plans) or should they 'learn on the job' as it were, and further develop their English skills by combining study with work-placed usage of English? This paper argues that the act of engaging in meaningful employment and / or voluntary work should itself raise the level of competence in English among learners and make them more employable.

Entry 2

Language focus: Past simple
Practice Opportunity: Describe a real or fictional day in work in the past e.g. "I started work at 9.00 o'clock. I checked my emails"

Language focus: Adjectives
Practice Opportunity: Skills and qualities for various jobs

Language focus: Future tenses – present continuous, will, going to
Practice Opportunity: Work search plans, plan a work-based event like a Christmas party "I'll bring a cake" "Who is going to bring a cake"

Language focus: Modal verbs must/ have to
Practice Opportunity: Health and safety rules in class / workplace

Language focus: Imperatives/ instructions
Practice Opportunity: Reviewing real/ creating their own work contracts

Language focus: Turn taking
Practice Opportunity: Plan a work-based event like a Christmas party, or hold a class discussion on a topic e.g. why it's good to work with coins/ tokens to submit when they contribute
Have a conversation back to back with a partner in class, with no non-verbal cues in order to replicate the experience of having a conversation on the telephone, something many learners find intimidating

The University of Manchester found that over 96% of ESOL learners in Manchester considered that speaking English outside the classroom boosted their confidence (Vassey *et al*, 2018:31). Teachers therefore should seek to create motivation among those who wish to defer employment until they are more fully competent in English. This is because using English outside the classroom is likely to improve their confidence in using English, and the workplace offers one of the most practical environments in which to gain opportunities to practise English.

It should be acknowledged that not all learners are interested in developing employability skills and have other motivations for learning English. As a tutor, it is important to be aware of how your provision is being funded and respond to the learner's motivation appropriately; where funding is linked to employability skills development then the tutor can try to create motivation where it may not initially exist – highlighting the advantages of participating in voluntary roles, being in work or in a better job. Where funding is based on other objectives, such as community cohesion and integration, then the focus on employability skill development may be lessened accordingly.

An exclusive focus on jobs and employability can become repetitive and lose impact. It is important to recognise that people have other interests besides finding work and to find out what interests a group of learners and use the things that interest and motivate them as a way into language. For example, if a group of people are interested in sport, they may carry out mock interviews playing the role of journalist and football manager. The journalist could ask about the manager's daily routine at work, ask them to describe their players etc. The work they undertake develops employability skills but the context created is one which is interesting for this group. At MAES, we try to place people on a course based on their interest in entering employment or a higher-level job, or on other reasons to learn English. We access different types of funding for these different types of courses.

MAES has made significant efforts to make ESOL learners more employable by implementing a number of strategies:

- Consideration of topics covered in classes e.g. Work in the UK, Benefits, CVs and Interviews
- Choice of the qualifications delivered e.g. Skills for Life ESOL qualifications, Functional Skills English and maths qualifications
- Focus on soft skills such as punctuality, time management, and working as part of a team

However, we believe that learners do not always see the links between what we cover in class and individuals becoming more employable, so how can we support them to see these links more clearly?

Entry 3

Language focus: Present perfect
Practice Opportunity: Write and speak about work experience (real or imagined), cover letters, and mock interviews
Bring in ex learners now working, have the class prepare interview questions

Language focus: Modal verbs for advice
Practice Opportunity: Generate possible work based problems and share ideas on how to solve them

Language focus: Past continuous
Practice Opportunity: Describe an accident at work

Language focus: Comparatives/ superlatives
Practice Opportunity: Compare employers on "best companies" list, compare salaries, hours, promotions opportunities, compare job adverts for rates of pay, required working hours etc.

Language focus: Used to
Practice Opportunity: Describe what people used to do in jobs that don't really exist anymore –e.g. cooper, farrier, thatcher
Describe your old work daily routine e.g. "I used to audit accounts of local businesses"

Highlighting the links between ESOL classes and employability skills

Make links visible

In the last few years we have included the presence of more 'visual literacy' input in classrooms, with posters and visual prompts about what employers want. The Learning and Work Institute (2015) give an example of such a list. These act as a useful starting point for teachers to encourage meaningful discussion in class on what these mean and how learners can demonstrate that they have these skills.

Embed employability in schemes of work

Schemes of work for the course have employability as a prominent area for tutors to focus on and plan for as an ongoing item rather than a variable element. Teachers make explicit with learners

how class tasks are selected to develop their employability skills, as in many cases learners may not yet have the analytical skills to make these connections without support.

Be a reflective practitioner

For people unfamiliar with employment or lacking experience of making connections between skills developed in one context and being applicable in another, it can be difficult to see the relevance of some tasks. Therefore, teachers take the time to reflect on activities carried out with learners: did the activities develop learners' employability skills? In what way? How are learners made aware of these links? How are learners helped to identify for themselves the relevance of their ESOL lesson to being more employable?

Create reflective learners

Tutors build in lesson time to ask learners explicitly how the work carried out makes them more employable, referring back to those posters on display and how the skills practised might be transferred to the work place; or to discuss what job roles might require these skills. In addition, teachers ask learners to take notes of their thoughts. These may be in multi-modal or multi-lingual format. Referring back to the example of carrying out an interview of a football manager, it would be useful afterwards to ask them to consider how those skills of asking and answering questions could be applied in a workplace context.

Level 1

Language focus: Subordinate clauses
Practice Opportunity: Making presentations on a work related topic e.g. pay inequality, health and safety in the workplace

Language focus: Past perfect
Practice Opportunity: Look at why an issue at work/ accident occurred, working backwards e.g. "By the time Amal started work, the leak had already started"

Language focus: Reported speech, reported instructions
Practice Opportunity: Report back to your boss about a discussion with a colleague

Language focus: Conditionals
Practice Opportunity: Discuss work based dilemmas, give advice or a range of solutions to a work based problem

Language focus: Formal / informal register
Practice Opportunity: write (in)appropriate work emails, practice greetings/ phrases for use with colleagues/ public

Language focus: Passive forms
Practice Opportunity: Describing a process in a workplace – how something is made

Little and often

While schemes of work will often have specific points where employment and employability are a key focus, to raise awareness, learners' attention should be drawn to how employability is embedded throughout all sessions in different forms. Creating reflective learners helps them make links between what they do in class and their current and aspirational goals, mediated at least in part by what an employer wants. Therefore, teachers should spend a little time in each session challenging learners to see the links between what is taught in class and their employability skills. Over time this should help to develop learners' analytical skills.

Gather evidence

How can teachers claim on behalf of learners that employability skills have been improved through the course? Even more importantly, how can teachers evidence such claims? At MAES, learners have an individual learner folder which includes a Learner Journey Booklet. This Learner Journey

Booklet has key course targets for each teaching block, differentiated for each level and focussing on aspects of employability.

Tutors write course reviews with learners. Employability skills targets are part of that conversation. They gather evidence of activities undertaken by learners where they worked on employability skills and store this evidence in learner wallets. By directly focussing on employability in course target setting, implementing one-to-one conversations and reviews with learners and gathering supporting evidence, employability is kept at the forefront of both tutors' and learners' minds.

Grammar practice ideas contextualized for employability skill development

In the text boxes on each page, this article has included some practical ideas for activities tutors can use in the classroom to achieve two goals simultaneously: to practise key grammar and language elements required of learners at specific ESOL levels, based on the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum level indicators; and to contextualise this language to allow the development and practice of employability skills.

The activities are signposted as suitable at specific ESOL levels. However, with adaptations or depending on the group of learners, these activities could be used at a variety of levels. I would be very happy to hear from colleagues who have developed alternative ideas, or who have used these ideas to stimulate learning. I hope you will find that these are activities which motivate learners, that don't place them under 'pressure' to find a job, but give them realistic opportunities to practise language in a work-related context.

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Models of Literacy Learning: purposes, functions and communicative practices

A seminar organised by the British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID) and hosted by SOAS University of London, 17th May 2018

A report composed by Tara Furlong based on input from participants at the event. Particular thanks go to the committee of BALID for their contributions to its compilation. More information can be found at http://balid.org.uk/

This half-day seminar provided a forum for exploring models of multi-lingual literacy-learning, their purpose, function, and impact on communities. In the post-colonial era of the 20th century, educationalists emphasised the value of establishing standard systems for writing local languages. The pressure for centralisation to some extent mirrored the desire for political, religious, and cultural cohesion. Political elites, commercial publishers and entrepreneurs all benefited from the drive to foster such standardisation, which is often at odds with the linguistic reality on the ground.

The seminar sought to address some of the issues that arise from attempts to marry cultural and linguistic landscapes with models of literacy learning. Our two panellists shared visions that challenge the tendency to standardisation

- Professor Friederike Lüpke, of SOAS University of London, heads the Crossroads project in Senegal, which develops language-independent literacies for inclusive education in multilingual areas (LILIEMA). She presents research on language as an abstract system with the social reality of creative and versatile language use.
- Professor Leketi Makalela, Head of the Division of Languages, Literacies and Literatures, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, presents a constant disruption of language and literacy boundaries, and the simultaneous recreation of new discursive ones. Professor Makalela is Founder and Chairman of Balang Foundation, and Founding Director of HUMEL (Hub for Multilingual Education and Literacies).

This report outlines the presentations by Professors Lüpke and Makalela; practical and academic queries and critiques of the studies put forward by experienced practitioners in the field; and a brief discussion of the themes which emerged. Participants' expectations and feedback are integrated. Video clips of each presentation and of the overall discussion are available in the relevant sections below. A video of short highlights from the seminar as part of a playlist of the event is available on YouTube here goo.gl/9D4Rgt. Further reading is signposted.

What participants were looking for

The seminar was chaired and facilitated by Dr Katy Newell-Jones, chair of British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID). It was aimed at practitioners, researchers, students, policy makers and NGO staff in the fields of literacy and education. There were round-table discussions, Q&A and other forms of interactive participation and networking. Initially, participants emphasised several themes of interest, such as the challenge of working with 'motivation', defined by learners as literacy for money, power and status; and how literacy is made meaningful, e.g. through social practice approaches, addressing agency and equity, as well as integration, human fulfilment and multicultural empowerment.

As part of this, celebrating and incorporating multilingualism into literacy learning was mentioned, and the need for adult literacies learning, which is often short of wider study skills, to appropriate learning resources and wider participatory approaches. Lower 'academic-type' skills and knowledge contexts are inclusive of teachers (as well as learners), particularly in areas of high mobility. Facilitation utilising technology was of interest.

Professor Friederike Lüpke, SOAS University of London

'The social realities of literacy learning in Senegal' presented the Crossroads project and LILIEMA approach. Professor Lüpke introduced the project arguing that distinct, standard forms of African languages are European constructs and therefore inherently colonial, in effect conceptualised by ‘Western’ linguists for linguists. The Roman orthographies developed are formally used by few. Regardless, grassroots literacies which do exist tend to follow an imported 'lead language model' and therefore the orthographies and grapheme-sound correspondence are not endemic to the language being served. Examples of translation, use of the Roman and Arabic (ajami) alphabets, and social media translanguaging were shared. These question comprehension and usage inside and outside of speech groups and discourse communities.

In the Casamance area of Senegal, near the Guinea-Bissau border, many languages are spoken extensively, and many others to a lesser extent. These belong to different African language families. French is also used. Individuals select which language they may use in interaction with different groups and for different purposes.

In such cases, how can literacies, which are traditionally dependent on the sounds and morphemes of the language spoken, be developed? Professor Lüpke argues that appropriate literacy development incorporates existing grassroots practices, including acknowledgement of heterogeneity and translanguaging. The LILIEMA project uses the official alphabet of Senegal, based on Wolof, for mono- or multilingual teaching and learning. This, it is argued, overcomes the need to choose one language. Any of the local languages can be written using the standard alphabet, developing their own orthographies. Standardised spelling systems are therefore not strictly required, and writers may adapt their repertoire across their life course. Educational provision is split into two levels, firstly embedding sound-grapheme correspondence at word level; secondly, utilising simple written texts for practical local purposes.

In terms of wider socio-political context, this approach is argued to support not only the multilingualism that is prevalent across people and contexts, but is responsive to the high numbers of children who are fostered out across language groups, the tradition of women marrying into communities they do not share a language with, and the high level of post-conflict mobility. It recognises the prevalence of patrimonial territorial identity based on founding clans, and the potential for ideological erasure of inhabitants, in a cultural system which works on the understanding that 'strangers' may become 'landlords' in their own right. As it is argued that the formal curriculum has 'no connection to local culture and everyday life, LILIEMA valorises local and regional knowledge', and the integration of strangers. LILIEMA provides an alternative to the deficit model of teaching children the language of instruction, empowers mother tongue learning, and provides a space for all languages to co-exist. This particularly enables recognition of locally confined and minority languages. The presentation culminates questioning categorical versus relational indexicality.

In critiquing this study, participants acknowledged the extraordinary context of southern Senegal and the ambition of supporting incipient literacy practices and orthographies. It is a different approach to historical Francophone attempts to translate and create dictionary aides in their endeavours. How well simplified Wolof orthography matches to sounds across language groups, and how distinct these languages are, is queried. Beyond providing an initial platform which aims to serve immediate personal and local community needs, participants questioned the extent to which the model serves non-homogenous audiences across space and time should local participants require this service. Will there be a call on notices, publishing services, or legal agreements, for example? These facilities may exist (or develop) in an alternative form in the local community. What appears to be prioritised is local meaning-making and supporting local uses and practices, which avoids the criticisms of phonics' disconnect with comprehension.

A video of clips from Professor Lüpke's talk is available on YouTube here https://youtu.be/ggWteYgV33o. A copy of the presentation, including references, is available here.

Professor Leketi Makalela, University of Witwatersrand

'Models of multilingual literacy learning in South Africa' presents the impact of mono-lingual literacy epistemologies and traditional instruction on richly multilingual learners, focussing in this instance on children. This perspective induces a multiple monolingualisms theoretical framework, contrary to more fluid concepts such as translanguaging, and considers the impact on literacy education.

Professor Makalela argues that multilingual children are inherently and disproportionately disadvantaged, rather than finding their rich cultural identities a valued resource bank. Traditional literacy instruction forces 'barking at text', with less focus on comprehension let alone expression. This pedagogy is demonstrated to appalling effect in quoted studies of educational results, for example in the Mathew effect, where children are often not in a position to build upon abstract work at secondary level. A focus limited to sound-grapheme correspondence does not develop morphological awareness, i.e. blocks of meaning rather than

approximate instances of sound. This has implications where language and literacy are used to access knowledge about the world and the self. Schooled 'individualism' may impoverish and cause inauthenticity, perhaps more so where 'failure' is perceived; in contrast, the Ubuntu approach presented would emphasise 'I am because you are' and wider self-affirmation.

In arguing for integrated multilingual literacy models, Professor Makalela outlined cultural differences between language and literacies practices. For example, in some African contexts, circumlocution is valued over getting straight to the point; the hearer deriving meaning may be emphasised over speaker responsibility for making meaning; or the use of tone to communicate meaning. These factors may emphasise relationships over 'meaning-making', which Western formal written traditions may find themselves in conflict with given their succinct, direct, explicit style. Inherent conflicts may lead to deficiency models, whereas the proposed Ubuntu approach emphasises inter-dependency, disruption and confluence. An Ubuntu multi-languaging approach, such as that of the Balang Foundation, supports multiple languages in learning, as does HUMEL (Hub for Multilingual Education and Literacies). The pedagogy supports languages and texts 'leaking into each other' and being transformed. It is argued this unleashes learner creativity, and by association, motivation. Home school partnerships are a key feature; as is the 'teacher as learner'. The presentation concludes on ways of 'knowing' and 'being' moving from fixity to fluidity.

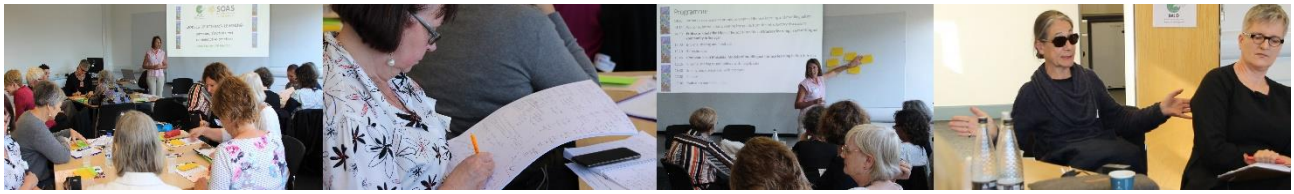
In critiquing this study, participants questioned the matching of formal language and literacy models to current or creative uses. A few of the issues raised, such as a preoccupation with sound-grapheme correspondence, are a feature of a range of early literacy initiatives which subsequently move on to, for example, morphology. Automation in these early 'decontextualised skills' areas is used as a basis for 'cognitive efficiency' releasing the capacity for higher order cognitive engagement in subsequent educational stages. Multisyllabic words, for example, may convey more information per sentence than monosyllabic words, which has implications for notional 'reading speeds'. Comprehension studies are often expected to run in parallel. 'Success' in these areas are pedagogical as much as curriculum resourcing matters, where comparative perceptions of 'failure' may trigger deficit model analysis. It may be asked, beyond providing an extremely valuable and clearly motivational initial platform which aims to serve immediate personal and local community needs, to what extent the educational model is complete in serving to underpin consequent higher order work and study. Does the study serve as an effective bridge or are changes required to secondary schooling? How do learner identities continue to interplay and develop with their learning experiences in later educational stages?

A video of clips from Professor Makalela's talk is available on YouTube here https://youtu.be/TY8NFVH04KE. A copy of the presentation, including references, is available here.

Language versus literacy

One of the themes which surfaced in discussions was the distinct nature of languages versus literacy practices as much as the relationships between them. There may be a difference between languages which are used to facilitate literacies learning, and the language(s) utilised in the literacies practices. Equally, infinitely flexible trans-languaging and -literacy usage may not carry the oral or literate 'canon' of knowledge which is the objective of many 'Western' educational systems, or may not transfer the same types of knowledge in the same way. The round table on materials put considerable emphasis on the availability of appropriate images to support pedagogy, i.e. to stimulate language and literacy practices, reflection and discussion. Appropriate images were argued to be images that learners would instantaneously recognise as people in environments engaging in activities, with markers of meaning which were culturally relevant. Where artists had been commissioned to create these materials, they were argued to be more successful in stimulating language and literacy responses than generic published materials.

There was further debate regarding the extent of multi-lingualism found in all contexts, the comparative familiarity of participants with the other languages in a classroom, or interest in learning (or funding) other languages, for example in an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) context. Beyond multi-lingualism, the contribution of learners' prior knowledge, experiences and social relationships, and their role in meaning-making, was emphasised.



Fixity versus fluidity

Languages standardise to enable communication across peoples, space and time with shared, often abstract, frames of reference which may be described as cultural, governance or academic. This may be distinct from and serve different purposes to day-to-day personal, social and business activity, which is likely to be closely related to diverse immediate personal and community identities. Potential differences between these language and literacy characteristics and purposes in different spheres with different audiences were not discussed; nor were the political implications of centralised 'standardisation' versus diverse expression. However, it was suggested that linear, sequential and prescriptive models might encourage people to make only linear connections and is perhaps to stifle reflective thought processes. The arguments may therefore have as much applicability to traditional monolingual Western learning as to international multilingual contexts.

In a separate stream of enquiry, the fixedness or grounding of language in territory or geography as much as in peoples and histories was put forward. This extended to the differences between dominant and minor languages, for example, in writing as an expression of identity rather than as an instrument for communication. From a pedagogical perspective, the role of stretching flexibility and adaptability within a secure structure of sounds, sentences and possible contexts may be overlooked in critiquing 'pure phonics' approaches, perhaps because the links back to reality are not subsequently made; or the flexibility and adaptability are not emphasised. The role of 'imagination' in reaching outside of immediate environment and experience was highlighted. Discussion extended to how orthographies are adapted to different dialects,

for example in marking tone; and how language and literacy are used to translate between, for example, different schema.

In looking at barriers to learning, it was suggested that the forms of fluidity discussed in the seminar allowed there to be 'no right answers' in a non-hierarchical structure. This approach encourages participation and collaborative learning environments which serve individual purposes. Creative approaches allow one to make one's own sense of the world and of the self, may emphasise encoding rather than decoding, but may at some point seek common frames of reference with other parties which is a different form of barrier. However, in this seminar, the importance of seeking local reading and writing practices was emphasised over global models.

Teachers and Training

A third theme which emerged was the level of demand on teachers' connections to their learners, political environments, and their own professional formation. Professional formation was considered to span language, literacy and pedagogical specialisms for cultures, age groups and purposes. There was the inherent requirement to also be able to generate adaptive spoken, written and pictorial learning resources, and to support their learners to create the same.

What participants found

Twenty-eight people participated in the seminar. In response to the presentations and activities, attendees highlighted their raised awareness of challenges to (indigenous) languages, consequent inaccessibility of literacy, and models of language learning which avoid single language boundaries. Concepts of multilingualism versus multiple monolingualism were generated which implicated heightened awareness of learner generated materials and learner uses of literacy, as well as the role of culturally relevant images in stimulating language and literacies in learning contexts. Ubuntu was compared to Freirian empowerment approaches. The importance of 'letting go' was reiterated, perhaps as part of the 'transformational' process. Finally, who is the expert?

A video of clips from the discussions is available on YouTube here https://youtu.be/L_uySJqr9n8.

BALID would like to thank Professor Lüpke and SOAS for kindly hosting *Models of Literacy Learning*, Professor Makalela for travelling from South Africa to enrich the epistemological offering and, of course, the attendees without whom we would not have had an event or such stimulating dialogue and reflections.

"Thank you. Really thought provoking and well run."

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This wide interdisciplinary report summarily draws on complex and contentious fields of academic enquiry and practice. They are reported as perceived by the writer, and as indicated by event participants. Wider reading in respect of the works of the two presenters are available below.

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Literacy as Social Practice in Vocational and Professional Contexts

Based on a contribution to a panel discussion at 'Literacy as Social Practice with the University of Sussex and BALID', 10th September 2018

Tara Furlong

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In celebration of International Literacy Day and in memory of Brian Street's lifelong work on Literacy as Social Practice (1984), this short paper suggests the application of *autonomous* and *ideological* models to adult literacies learning in vocational and professional education, for example in Functional Skills English but also in higher order academic literacies. A letter (or email) as social practice is used to introduce profound debates with an accessible example. The concepts introduced are developed briefly in educational and professional contexts, with reference to associated theoretical frameworks. The disjuncture between, for example, academic literacies and apprenticeship frameworks, is drawn out with a focus on the influence of material conditions and contexts inherent in different industrial and commercial domains. The discussion concludes by referring back to the original dichotomy between *autonomous* and *ideological* models, arguing for grounded, or situated, theorisation of literacy as social practice in considering vocational and professional expertise.

In an *autonomous* model, literacy in and of itself has cognitive and social effects which are independent of socialised 'making' or norms, i.e. it is a 'technical and neutral skill' (Street, 2001:7). In an *ideological* model on the other hand, literacy is a social practice which varies across cultural groupings; its effects are socially constituted. The term *literacies* as opposed to *literacy* expresses the multiplicity of these 'versions'. Street (2003:2) argues literacy

> ... is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles. It is about knowledge... the effects of learning (a) particular literacy will be dependent on... particular contexts. Literacy, in this sense, is always contested, both its meanings and practices, hence particular versions of it are always 'ideological', they are always rooted in a particular world-view...

Physical, or material, conditions and contexts of place and activity do not receive explicit mention in the dichotomy Street presents between *autonomous* and *ideological* models, other than implied as social, or socially-mediated, phenomena. Physical, or material, conditions and contexts of place and activity start to receive explicit attention in the *ideological* models put forward by the New Literacy Studies, for example in works on situated literacy (Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič, 2000; Barton and

Hamilton, 1998) and multimodality (Bezemer and Kress, 2016; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Hamilton (2000:17) documents visible and non-visible elements of participants, settings, artefacts and activities, in which there are 'Structured routines and pathways that facilitate or regulate actions'. Even mediated as social practice, this paper argues that literacies practices must be grounded in and determined at least in part by material conditions and their associated functions. These material conditions, and their impact on literacies practices, must also at least in part vary by the material conditions and functions of vocation or profession. Ultimately, these materially determined functions must therefore contribute at least in part to Street's 'socially constructed epistemological principles'. Regardless, people use different literacies practices for a wide range of reasons and purposes, some of which relate to functioning in vocational and professional work and associated communities of practice (Furlong, 2017; Bezemer and Kress, 2016; cf. Lave and Wenger, 1991). This being the case, attention to andragogic and curricular development in respect of this multiplicity of 'contextualised', 'embedded' and 'integrated' literacies practices has been shown to significantly aid adult learning (NRDC, 2006). Presumably for these reasons,

> The Institute for Apprenticeships encourages its panel of professionals to incorporate additional occupation-specific maths and English requirements into the standards for each route...
>
> BIS DfE, 2016:50

To start with an accessible example of literacy as social practice, a letter expresses relationships in wider contexts which are at least in part determined ideologically and by implication hegemonically, i.e. by 'their position in relations of power' (Street, 2003:2; cf. Fairclough, 2015). Without diverting attention to the differences between a letter (or email) one might send to a close relation versus professionally, for example, why might a letter not have the desired effect, or any at all? Aside from its composition, we might query how it was sent, who it was received by, their norms of understanding and response, or whether they have the capacity to act. We might ask to what extent the ideologies, or world-views, of writer and recipient are mutually comprehensive and how well this is represented in the letter. If a perfectly composed letter is received but the values expressed are in direct conflict with those in receipt, will it receive the same response as a less well-crafted letter which embodies the values in question? These rhetorical questions do not directly interrogate contextually determined nuance in the composition of a letter, in structure, content, or interaction (cf. Halliday, 2014; Fairclough, 2010). Rather, they start to outline the scope of application and effect in practice. Brian Street with Alan Rogers (2012) spearheaded a LETTER (Learning for Empowerment Through Training in Ethnographic Research) project in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa as a component of education development activity. The greater the diversity found across a landscape of literacy practices, the more one might argue for ethnographic-type methods to elicit the uses and the distinctions between forms.

Within education, certification may be aspirational but it is also functional. The knowledge and skills developed via certified education might reasonably be expected to match closely to those of the

vocation or profession itself, alongside academic verification. To illustrate, an anecdotal example includes a fine arts, media, graphics and design curriculum I taught on. A group of learners were required to present on their project work for each module as part of their main qualification for entry to university, as well as their subsidiary qualification in communication. The first attempts did not go well. There was too much to cover in presenting research, content, structure, explanation, reference, expression, presentation and original innovation within their work to satisfy the vocational requirements. I therefore worked with the vocational tutor and focussed on applied language and literacy practice. Within a few months, the learners were achieving distinction grades in the presentation element of their modules, which provided an excellent base for their written work (cf. Mercer, 2000). They passed the presentation in their communication qualification, a precursor to Functional Skills[2] at levels 2 and 3[3]. Their work satisfied two teachers examining two distinct sets of criteria, met the negotiated and agreed national criteria, passed internal and external moderation, and provided a practical basis for placements in commerce as exemplified in their final projects with live, local businesses.

The presentations were genuinely a joy to participate in, as they carefully explained and referenced their practice, understanding and inspiration in original design work. However, in different vocational areas, such as in childcare or business studies or plumbing, the knowledge, skills and practices necessary for certification and successful placement are different. By implication, the nature and application of communication practice in structure, content, and interaction, in how they are expressed, are different. The presentations need to function not only as an academic submission, but as a foundation in the ideologies and hegemonies of particular industries. The *ideological* nature of each context requires response, if we accept there are no purely *autonomous* models in which literacy practices are not constituted by their social environment. Proto-literacy practices, where the underpinning literacy exists in language (cf. Mercer, 2000) and Hamilton's 'structured routines' but are not fully-fledged literacy practices within the industrial domain, are a further consideration in curriculum and andragogy for adult education and training.

In higher order studies, such as at university, the social practices argument presents as *academic literacies* (Lea and Street, 2006), where the concept of *autonomous* versus *ideological* models of literacy start to be applied to distinct epistemologies grounded in vocational and professional spheres. Lea and Street's work compares *academic literacies* with strands of *autonomous* study skills and academic socialisation models. However, the distinctions between diverse industrial or commercial spheres are not explicitly examined or theorised in detail as 'epistemological issues and social processes including power relations among people and institutions' *(ibid*:228). The study of genre is referred to superficially, with distinctions between forms of 'private' versus 'public' writing across professional and academic domains found significant 'thus foregrounding the relationship between writing and issues of epistemology, which is a dominant framing in the literacies research field' (*ibid*:234). Barton and Hamilton (2000:14) have argued that, 'related to the constructed

[2] English qualification set in applied English, maths and ICT.
[3] UK compulsory certification at ages c.16 and c.18.

nature of literacy, any theory of literacy implies a theory of learning'. In acknowledging Street's 'socially constructed epistemological principles', this paper suggests that the physical, or material, conditions and contexts of place and activity are implicitly constitutive of vocational and professional working contexts and of learning in them, and must therefore functionally influence the forms literacy as social practice takes. To the extent developed, the ideologies and hegemonies of certification may not adequately match those of working contexts, and may therefore not adequately prepare and develop workforces for the literacies practices inherent in distinct working contexts. Apprenticeships, which are located more in industry and commerce than in education, may be argued to suffer as educational endeavours from an absence of theorisation of literacy as social practice.

Finally, in professional practice, the ideologies and hegemonies of community structures which constitute (and regulate) the profession may not match those of technical specialisation. To illustrate, an anecdotal example includes being in the fortunate position some years ago of having access to two associated but contrasting sets of legal communications. One might reasonably be described as incompetent, the other gold standard. A combined discourse and systemic functional linguistic analysis of the communications revealed consistent differences in structure, content, interaction and expression related to context and effect, which were clearer in the gold standard in terms of professional function. Of all the professions, the practising legal profession might be considered best placed to represent its clients and implicit community structures and by implication communicate the most effective letters. However, what might superficially appear a difference in style in a literacy practice may be found indicative of deeper professional divides. Some might therefore consider a communications specialist more appropriate. Others still might select a child for simplicity and accessibility. The ideologies and hegemonies implicit in each of these examples constitute the distinct natures of their relative fields of expertise, with curricular and andragogic implications.

Literacy as social practice is a field which overlaps with the lifelong work of many others. For example, Fairclough (*ibid)* and colleagues analyse the expression of power structures and influence through discourse analysis. Halliday (*ibid)* developed Systemic Functional Linguistics where the technicalities of intricate grammars map specific contexts, including relationships. Kress (*ibid)* looks at contributions of multi-modality to meaning-making. Barton and Hamilton (*ibid)*, for example, in the New Literacy Studies consider situated everyday and powerful literacies. Bourdieu (1986) analyses interacting paradigms for cultural and social capital versus economic quantification. Literacies cannot be separated out from the people and composite contexts which make them and make meaning from them.

Later in his career, Street turned his attention from global everyday to academic literacies. There is long-standing vernacular debate regarding the extent to which traditional academic literacies have a place in vocational education, such as apprenticeships. With higher level apprenticeships now existing to post-graduate level in the UK, this debate may be put to rest through paradigms derived

from literacy as social practice in the vocations and professions, which respond to the tensions between *autonomous* and *ideological* models. Forms of 'ethnographic-type' work may be done on the literacies practices which constitute vocational and professional areas and the community structures which support them. Out of these forms of expertise, we may aspire to derive adapted *autonomous* frameworks for their comparative simplicity in curricular provision.

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Educators' Research-Engaged Literacies Practices

Tara Furlong

Recent research findings are strongly indicative that literacies practices associated with research-engaged andragogy improve learning outcomes, and educators' professional well-being. However, there is often low explicit awareness of the practices engaged in, traditional or digital.

Salient characteristics of the literacies practices relate to reading and talking for ideas and evaluative feedback; talking about learner profiles, contexts and evidence; writing to generate and process ideas, evidence and evaluative feedback. These are emphasised as dialogic processes, and implicate professional learning communities.

Some of the practical implications include

- 'Ethnographic-style' research into a diversity of scalable existing situated literacies practices in post compulsory education, related to evidence-based and research-informed andragogy, including professional learning communities
- Targeting existing institutional and cross-sectoral mechanisms to optimise the literacies practices which mediate sharing practice, evaluative feedback, and forms of writing as process
- A campaign raising the profile of higher order literacies' status.

This presentation briefly outlines the research base, and explores the findings. Full report freely available on https://ioe.academia.edu/TaraFurlong

A Mood of Hope, a Legacy of Writing: Sue Gardner and the Community Literacy and Publishing Movement

A tribute compiled by Mary Hamilton with contributions from Richard Andrews, Ursula Howard, Keith Jackson, Jane Mace, Juliet McCaffery, Rebecca O'Rourke, Judd Stone and Alan Tuckett

Sue Gardner, who died last December, was a key innovator in adult literacy at the beginning of the 1970s during the first adult literacy campaign in the UK. The vision she held about literacy work as a form of cultural politics informed and inspired a whole strand of the movement that developed at that time. It was a strand that survives to the present but has not had the visibility it deserves within mainstream adult literacy.

Sue was a good friend to RaPAL, especially when we were looking for a new direction, and she helped initiate what became our annual conference from her base in Hackney. Sue took part in the Changing Faces history project, giving interviews and a carefully organised and annotated collection of her papers which are stored in the Lancaster University archive. Many current RaPAL members may know very little about her work so this tribute is an opportunity to revisit the community publishing movement and Sue's important contributions to it.

February

Between Harborough and Leicester there were lambs.
The ground one white glaze from the fringes of London,
ice plates sopped in the rivers, the ploughland turned
in slabs, brambles trip-wired the banks, and cabbages lay
nailed flat in the allotments;
the sheep mooched in the frost with dingy fleeces,
and a magpie stood on the shoulders of a ewe.
But between Harborough and Leicester there were lambs.

A poem written by Sue on her way to Losehill Hall in 1978 and published among the many pieces by learners in Let Loose. It expresses a mood of hope amid bleakness.

Sue went to Newnham college, Cambridge and then to Nottingham University where she completed a PhD in English Literature. She excelled both as a student and as a teacher. Alan Tuckett recalls that for fifteen years Nottingham University's Adult Education diploma showed a film of Sue teaching a literature class, as an example of outstanding teaching—inclusive, challenging, creative, fun.

Instead of continuing her career as a university-based academic, Sue deliberately chose a different path. According to her brother, Dick Andrews, 'she said that her education had been paid for entirely by public funding and that she wanted to work in a career which attempted to pay something back to those who had not benefited so well.'

Her major contribution to adult literacy began to take shape when she took a post with the Workers Educational Association on Merseyside, focusing on working class oral history. In Liverpool in the early 1970s there was a significant critical mass of creative activity in adult education, in response to recognition of how education had failed many working-class and ethnic minority students, especially in the Afro-Caribbean community. Even the WEA had come to cater mainly for middle-class students and there was a demand on adult education to widen its appeal to working class students and women. The same critiques were current in schools and teacher education.

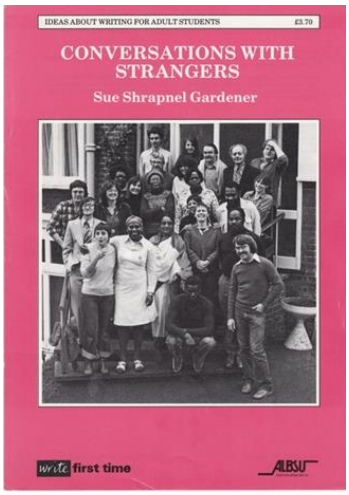
Sue was well aware of the debates around literacy and culture and the academic arguments that accompanied them, such as those put forward by Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, John Berger and James Britten – arguments about the differences between high culture and popular culture and what counts as 'real' literature. She explored the sociological and historical interpretations of class experience and consciousness. Paulo Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* describing his work with the dispossessed in Latin America, had recently been published in English and Sue was interested in how this could be made relevant for Britain.

Taking these debates as her starting point, and moving into the new, completely undefined area of adult literacy education, Sue set about developing methodologies that would confront issues of language and power. She proposed methods of language teaching that drew on student experience and local knowledge, with the teacher playing the role of 'scribe' or 'writing hand'. This was known at the time as the 'language experience' approach.

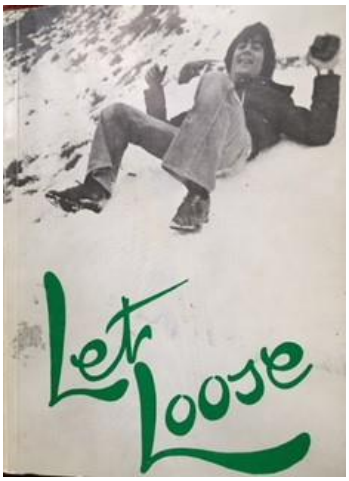
Preparing for a reading evening in Calderdale

Until the Right to Read campaign of the early seventies, literacy work with adults was overwhelmingly seen as remedial education. Sue took this approach head-on, asserting that, 'My students are **not** problems, but they do have problems.' She spoke at conferences and summer schools and her combination of intellectual authority, powerful advocacy and grounded practice had a profound effect on the development of the field. According to Keith Jackson she also had a lasting impact on thinking within the University of Liverpool Institute of Extension Studies project, which developed the Scotland Road Writers Workshop and the Second Chance to Learn programme.

In writing about the outstanding individual that Sue was, it is impossible not to talk about the wider context of the time, and the networks she moved within – the many remarkable people who shared her vision and contributed in different ways to the radical work she was committed to. It is perhaps inevitable too, that in confronting issues that go to the heart of literacy, discrimination and claims to power, Sue ran into controversy and some disappointment with the restricted, utilitarian, ways in which the field seemed to be developing. During the Thatcher years of cuts in adult education when testing and qualifications began to shape what could be taught and funded, she felt, 'it became a corridor with walls' which she could not identify with.



After leaving the WEA, Sue worked for Kirby College through the Lancashire LEA and began to be involved with adult literacy campaign projects, contributing to the first *BBC Adult Literacy Handbook* as part of the 'On The Move' campaign. In 1975 she moved to London for a post with the City and East London College (now part of City and Islington College) and was seconded to Centerprise[4], which became one of the iconic community literacy and publishing projects, supporting literacy learners to write, edit, publish and sell their work, with Centerprise poets regularly outselling those on the Faber lists. The vision behind Centerprise, and other similar projects, was to create local opportunities for writing and publishing, challenging the idea that these were, and should remain, elite activities. Centerprise joined the newly formed Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers in 1976 and Rebecca O'Rourke recalls that, 'Sue played a key role in the formation of The Fed through her community education connections in Liverpool and literacy education networks, particularly in Manchester and London.'



Judd Stone worked with Sue at Centerprise: 'At that time she was the only full-time literacy tutor in Hackney. From an empty room she created a thriving centre. Part-time paid tutors joined her but the centre relied on volunteers whom she trained to work together with students. Reading and discussions ranged across a wide variety of topics including news items and local politics. She initiated a publication called *Making news*, a weekly roundup of topics of current and political interest made easy to read through using accessible language and line breaking. Tutors and students also worked on developing professionally produced student writing so that there was adult relevant material for adults to read both at Centerprise and in the many other adult literacy centres developing across the UK.' When Sue moved on after six years, she left a flourishing centre which carried on until the 90s.

[4] An independent bookshop, café and later community centre in Hackney, which opened at the start of the '70s and closed down in 2012.

Sue was a founder member of the *Write First Time* collective which for 10 years between 1975-1985 produced a regular national newspaper put together by groups of literacy students and tutors around the country. The national government agency in England and Wales, ALBSU, supported this work over a period of eight years and also funded a Writing Development project carried out by Sue which produced a tutor pack called *Conversations with Strangers*. This pack began to translate the innovative writing activities she and others had been using into teacher resources, thereby formalising it as an approach to adult literacy work.

As Ursula Howard recalls, 'In 1977 and 1978 *Write First Time* intensified efforts to support students' voices and promote the publication of writing across the country. Sue and the collective organised two residential winter weekend conferences at Losehill Hall in the Derbyshire Peak District. From Friday night to Sunday night, learners and tutors and organisers worked non-stop together on writing, photography, drama and publishing. The change which resulted reached far beyond the 100 plus people who participated. A book, *Let Loose* was a combination of expressive writing, interviews and a practical manual for writing and publishing. And from that moment, *Write First Time* was written and produced by students and tutors locally, across the country'.

Write First Time was supported by grants from the national adult literacy resource agency (ALRA, and its successors) during the ten years of its existence. The grant had to be renewed every three to four years. In the final issue (10:1 March 1985) the history of the paper is described in a special editorial supplement (*As we see it - for*

write first time

Write First time 'getting it wrong'

by Simon Freeman

A LITTLE-KNOWN magazine called Write First Time, a 10p broadsheet written by adult literacy students with a circulation that rarely creeps above 6,000, is being closely monitored by government ministers keen to halt the magazine's slide into political comment. Government attention was focused on Write First Time, which is funded by the Department of Education and for eight years has been undisturbed by controversy, after the magazine published a rather unflattering poem about Margaret Thatcher.

The poem, by a middle-aged Bradford man who has since moved out of literacy classes to tackle 'O' level, appeared on the front page, accompanied by an equally uncomplimentary photograph of the prime minister. To make matters worse, at least as far as the government was concerned, the magazine carried in the same issue a piece by an official from the trade-union-backed Labour Research Department on the implications of the 1982 Employment Bill.

After protests from Conservative MPs, the Department of Education launched an investigation and for several months the co-operative which runs the quarterly broadsheet feared that the government grant, worth about £10,000 a year, would be cut off.

Last month, William Shelton, the education minister responsible for adult education, relented and agreed to continue the financial support, but only after considerable concessions from Write First Time that it would "exercise greater editorial control" over material.

The latest issue, out last week, shows that the magazine's editors have heeded the warnings to avoid insulting attacks on Conservative policy. You and Law, a column on the back page, written by an outsider and designed to help literacy students understand matters like immigration or employment law, is now occupied by a charming story about a parrot.

The co-operative is still making defiant noises protesting its editorial independence but some members privately admit that they have been forced to "self- censor".

Sue Shrapnel, a member of the co-operative, who also runs a national writing development project, said that there had never been any question of the magazine's becoming political. "Many of the students who write for the magazine are working-class and of course they have grievances. But that's as far as it goes."

Alan Wells, the director of the magazine's controlling body, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (a government quango) is trying to play the the row down. He says that "after certain assurances were given by Write First Time their grant was approved". This simply meant, he added, that there would be "greater editorial continuity". Pieces on the law by outside contributors would

MRS THATCHER

By Colin Fearnley

Come, Mrs. Thatcher
Let me lead you through this desolate land—
The land you have laid so bare.
See all the dead factories left there,
See the old, the sick, the young
Shuffling round, heads bowed with despair,
Asking is there no-one who cares.

See the Nation's body laying there
Blood flowing from its wounds.
Cut by a surgeon with no care
Of the body held there.
Her coat once blue, now red
From the blood of her dead.

The front page poem

no longer appear, as the magazine was designed as a platform for literacy students. But other staff at the unit admit that it is unlikely that the Thatcher poem would, in the present climate, be printed. "After the experience they have had, I think the magazine people would think twice about printing a poem like that now," said one.

Shelton is unrepentant about his intervention. "The poem was in jolly bad taste," he told The Sunday Times. "I thought it could upset a lot of people. You have to realise that if people are using Department of Education money, then we are responsible. It was a repugnant poem."

But he denied he was trying to censor Write First Time. "I think it's a good magazine. It's not a question of me going for it politically. A lot of it is very anti-establishment. I don't mind that. I don't think they are exactly writhing under censorship."

write first time

Price 10p - Year 7 No. 3 - November 1982

John's true spook story

by John Elliott

It was 12 o'clock at night, the late film had just come on the colour T.V. Something compelled me to look around. I saw this headless figure coming through the wall, five other people saw the figure too, so it couldn't have been my imagination.

The figure, some bloke dating back to the Jacobite Rebellion, drifted through the opposite wall. This was the ghost John Radcliff, Earl of Derwent. The other ghosts were his brother and sister, Charles and Anna. We didn't take much notice of the figures, just carried on watching telly.

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write first time

A theme at A time?

The Write First Time collective is thinking again about getting funds for the paper, and about how it should develop.

One idea we have
is that each issue should concentrate
on one theme, or one group of writers.
The groups we have thought of
are: women,
Black people living in Britain,
prisoners and ex-prisoners,
people living in the country.

They are all groups
who get less chance to say
what they care about
and how things are with them.

If we did the paper like this,
it would give each issue a strong character.

What do you think ?
Would you like to read issues like that ?
Would you make a special effort
to send us writing on that theme
if we said what each issue would be ?
Would you like to work with us
to make one of these issues ?

Write to us now.
We will tell you in the next issue
what we have decided.

the last time) and it tells the story - so revealing of attitudes of the time - of how it was forced to close down when its grant was not renewed. WFT was born in the optimistic times of the 1970s and fell foul of the politics of the Thatcher years. In 1983, Conservative MPs objected to a critical poem published about Margaret Thatcher and demanded closer editorial control over what students were writing about (see article from *The Times* 1st May, 1983). The government of the time was not keen to read what students had to say about their lives in unemployment, and how they had been failed by the state education system. When the grant came up for renewal the following year, the national literacy agency was not able, or perhaps not willing, to withstand the political pressures if it was to survive itself in an increasingly difficult climate.

Sue understood that the issues facing literacy work were international in scope and 1989 she became voluntary co-ordinator of the utopian International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education, working with among others the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization in Tunis. After leaving Centerprise, she worked in a variety of roles in teacher training in London, then as a consultant helping support community literacy and learning initiatives for the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (now the Learning and Work Organisation) at a time when government commitment to lifelong learning flowered under David Blunkett as Secretary of State for Education.

The worker writer and community publishing movement in adult literacy survives despite the onslaught of utilitarian, top-down approaches to adult learning and literacy. Sue was inspirational to that movement and to ensuring its extensive legacy of student-authored books and tutor resources detailing the methods she and others had developed through long discussion and practice. Her work pulled down the enclosures surrounding 'literature' and made it possible to include student writing in what had been a rarefied world. She created a mood of hope in literacy through advocating cultural action and creative expression for everyone that is just as relevant and urgent for adult literacy today.

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FOR THE GRANDMOTHERS

I don't know her
but I know she's listening
in a hard elbow chair
fingers tapping its arm
never learned to rest

What you been doing then, gal?

Writing this stuff, Nan.
Don't know what you'll think of it.

What's it about?

Floods, wash tubs, mothers, ghosts,
unemployment and the smell of paint—
anything people talk about.
It's about words.
Getting them down on paper

That.
Like your mother.
She was one for book-learning.

Not just their books, Nan.
Pulling out into books
our truths that no-one heard
only the big-eyed dog
or the fire in the pub
or the sheets on the ironing table.
Only the child on the stairs.

Never had no children, did you?

Never did. Only books.

Words never put no dinner on the table
Don't know, though.
Must have put yours there.
Not a bad dinner at that.

Words did, Nan.
They talked the money out of the pay packet
into your hand—
talked it in there in the first place,
through the union, and the law
if you're lucky
Talked many women out of a beating,
talked children asleep,
rigged up a makeshift of dreams for them,
made do and mended
when the dreams fell apart,
made jokes, made sense,
made the irony
you use against me now.
Your words, Nan.
Where else did I get them from?

Well, you carry on, gal.
I suppose you know what you want.

Suppose so, Nan.
Will you have a look at it
when it's finished?

Maybe I will.
Got time for that now.

Sue Gardener
18.3.85

Poem "For the Grandmothers" published in Conversations with Strangers

More Resources

The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers has a great online site and its archive is housed in the TUC Library at London Metropolitan University. It is really worth exploring if you are interested in knowing more about the work that Sue promoted within adult literacy. There is more material at http://www.bishopsgate.org.uk/Library/Archives-Online and in the Mass Observation archive at the University of Sussex

Tom Woodin, an historian based at the Institute of Education in London who was himself involved in community publishing projects, has written a number of articles and a book *Working Class Publishing in the 20th Century*. He has also written an online piece about Centerprise on the History Workshop site.

This includes a reference to Rosa Schling's *The Lime Green Mystery: an Oral History of the Centerprise Co-operative* which was published in 2017 by On the Record.

The *Write First Time* archive - so central to Sue's work including details of how it was produced and the political constraints it faced - is housed in Ruskin College, Oxford and is another

wonderful resource for anyone interested in exploring further.

Hamilton, Mary, and Yvonne Hillier. *Changing faces of adult literacy, language and numeracy: A critical history*. Trentham Books, 2006. And see also the project website with links to oral history interviews and the documentary archive at Lancaster.

The oral history of *Pecket Well,* a student-run college in Yorkshire can be found on this site.

MRS THATCHER by Colin Fearnley

Come, Mrs. Thatcher
Let me lead you through this desolate land -
The land you have laid so bare.
See all the dead factories left there,
See the old, the sick, the young
Shuffling roud, heads bowed with despair,
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Blood flowing from its wounds.
Cut by a surgeon with no care
Of the body laid there.
Her coat once blue, now red
From the blood of her dead.

Text of Colin Fearnley's piece published in Write First Time

Global Conversations in Literacy Research: Digital and critical literacies

Edited by Peggy Albers

Publisher : Routledge (2018)

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Reviewed by Vera Hutchinson

Vera Hutchinson is a lecturer at UCL Institute of Education, teaching on the Post-Compulsory PGCE English with Literacy and ESOL, and the Bachelor in Education Studies programme. She has previous experience as an adult literacy tutor and manager, and is a former RaPAL secretary. She can be contacted on v.hutchinson@ucl.ac.uk

This book consists of 15 excellent chapters, drawn from web seminars focussed around digital and critical literacies and hosted by Global Conversations in Literacy Research (GCLR). The talks in this volume, edited by Peggy Albers, offer readers the opportunity to engage with a wide range of prominent researchers and theorists from around the world, including Allan Luke, Jerome Harste, Vivian Vasquez, Hilary Janks, Brian Cambourne, Catherine Compton-Lilly, Sharon Murphy, Richard Beach, Guy Merchant, Karen Wohlwend, Jackie Marsh, James Paul Gee, Catherine Beavis, Julia Davies, Bonny Norton and Donna E. Alvermann.

As these chapters started off as live talks, the writing has an immediacy that is not often present in academic writing. The authors communicate complex ideas clearly, and often passionately. They encourage us to engage in critical exchanges about literacy theory and practice which help us to challenge assumptions about language and power, and about learning. The chapters also offer personal and historical insights which deepen our understanding of context, such as Allan Luke's discussion of the 'four resources model' for literacy education. Bonny Norton explores the role of identity and multilingual literacies, encouraging us as teachers and researchers to consider a learner's investment in the digital literacy practices of the classroom and how that relates to a

learner's 'imagined identities'. Sharon Murphy takes a look at PISA and New Literacy Studies from the perspective of ethically based assessment. Donna Alvermann challenges binaries such as formal and informal learning.

Throughout the volume, authors explore the significance and affordances of digital tools in differently resourced contexts and with different age groups, including Guy Merchant's description of 'mobile babies' and 'mobile toddlers'!

An important aspect of this publication is how it connects us and signposts us to online resources, including the authors' live talks on YouTube, making possible new opportunities for sharing and accessing literacy research worldwide. This book will be a useful resource to scholars, students, teachers and teacher educators to talk about some of the key theoretical and practical issues in digital and critical literacy. It also inspires us to join those global conversations in order to play our part in creating a more equitable and sustainable world.

News from the sector

Tara Furlong

Tara is the Chair of RaPAL and can be contacted on webweaver@rapal.org.uk

UEA are offering a free webinar series on adult literacies, the first on the topic of women offenders. The Department for Education have been busy in recent months, releasing a series of activity from a digital skills consultation, falling participation in English and maths, and a mention of adults in the Post-16 Skills Plan, to the results of an employers' survey where careful reading identifies applied adult literacies in workplace contexts. We're still accepting papers for Rethinking Participation. This edition closes with a song – Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Learning Behind and Beyond Bars: An ethnographic study of women offenders in the UK

The first in a short set of adult literacies webinars by PhD candidates, Learning Behind and Beyond Bars explores informal and non-formal learning experiences of woman offenders who have been serving their sentence outside the prison as they are on probation https://www.bigmarker.com/uea-unesco-chair/Learning-Behind-and-Beyond-Bars3-2018-12-13-02-00-pm?bmid=1e2c225a9d31 This webinar series has been organised by the UEA UNESCO Chair in adult literacy and learning for social transformation.

Improving adult basic digital skills

The Department for Education have an open consultation to 10th January on new national standards setting out the basic digital skills needed for life and work. This includes plans to introduce improved basic digital skills qualifications at 2 levels: 'beginner' (designed for adults with little or no prior experience of using digital devices or the internet); and 'essential' (designed for adults with some experience of using digital devices and the internet, but lacking the full range of basic digital skills needed for life and work). Views on arrangements to introduce a national entitlement to basic digital skills training from 2020, along with existing entitlements for English and maths, are also sought. More here https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-adult-basic-digital-skills

Falling participation in adult English and maths, and the Post-16 Skills Plan

There has been a further 12.1% fall in participation in adult English and maths courses between 2016/17 and 2017/18. The fall is greatest in English (16.1%), followed closely by maths (15.8%), with a small uplift in ESOL. The fall overall since 2011/12 is 38.7%, as reported on 6th December. On the upside, the revised Post-16 Skills Plan does now explicitly mention adults, focussing almost exclusively on 16-19. While there are no signs of an accompanying plan for lifelong learning, one is promised 'later in the year'. As this was published 30th November, one must assume later in the year means 2019.

The Employer Skills Survey 2017

Released in August, the annual Employer Skills Survey made an interesting read for its implicit

commentary on adult literacies, often 'higher order' in applied contexts. It reported a lack of digital skills, advanced IT skills, and complex analytical skills. The main people and personal skills lacking predominantly related to self-management skills, management and leadership, and sales and customer handling skills. 'Skills' gaps may hinder the employer's ability to function to its full potential in terms of productivity and profitability. Employers reported that a lack of proficiency among their staff was impacting the performance of their organisation, mainly through increased workloads for other staff, followed by higher operating costs and difficulties meeting quality standards.

The average number of days training per staff trainee has decreased slightly, while overall training expenditure has increased by 1% since 2015, from £43.6bn to £44.2bn. This training expenditure is equivalent to £2,470 per person trained per annum. There was also a decrease in the number of staff being trained to nationally recognised qualifications, from 3.5 million in 2015 (20% of those being trained) to 3.3 million in 2017 (18% of all those being trained). An evident shift since 2015 in how employers provide training for their staff comes from the increased use of online training and e-learning. Around half (51%) of all employers providing training had made use of online training or e-learning for at least some of their training; up from 45% in 2015. Increased use of online training and e-learning was evident across the UK nations and all sectors of the economy.

Rethinking Participation

Draft papers on Rethinking Participation welcome to 29th December. See https://rapal.org.uk/journal/write-for-us/call-for-articles/

Roles in RaPAL

We have a small number of roles standing open, namely a Regional Advocates Co-ordinator and a few Ordinary Member positions for those not ready to take on a full role but interested in participating informally and helping out here and there.

If you have any time to spare and would like to take advantage of the development opportunities RaPAL provides in the adult literacies sector, please do consider volunteering with us. Participation develops traditional officer roles but also experience in forms of digital interaction, teaching and learning; editing, reviews and publishing; event planning; project management; networking… and of course, adult literacies! We are a very friendly, hard-working group.

Love Our Colleges

With thanks to Chesterfield College for a cheery reflection on years of cuts: https://youtu.be/abON9rcd44A

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

WRITING GUIDELINES

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