

# A RaPAL Workshop Literacy or English? Numeracy or Maths?

**A debate on which terms best describe  
the literacy studies which our  
organisations advocate**

# What is the objective of this workshop?

**By the end of the session the following will have been considered:**

- Whether Literacy is not only suddenly disappearing as a name for classes where students learn to become literate, but also as a particular learning experience
- How the decision to describe the post-school Level 1 and 2 English as 'functional' compares to what is happening in other countries such as Scotland, Europe and globally
- *Skills for Life* as an overarching term for basic skills training is disappearing from Literacy, Numeracy and from ESOL. Is this a result of a deliberate new policy or a sign of an underlying new discourse in adult education?

# Why are we having this debate?

- We are aware of the shift in terminology
- The current official thinking shifts towards a side-tracking of the provision that was originally conceived of as Literacy
- The name ‘Literacy’ is still being used worldwide. Should England and Wales be different?
- Our name – RaPAL – defines our professional position and is therefore up for questioning among our own members

# Literacies

- There are drawbacks to withdrawing the overall term Literacy from the provision of literacies because the underlying meaning of the expression Literacy is that which constitutes our everyday communication activities and our access to these in our day to day lives.
- A compelling example is the area of Digital Literacies which require a set of new but widely prevalent skills. It could be argued that these literacies must be given as much study as the FS Skills set of literacies in our current society.
- In what way can we preserve the notion of literacies and ensure its significance is given as much weight in policy making as the set of skills lauded by the current 'Employability' agenda?



# 3 groups to discuss the same question

**QUESTION:** What will be *disadvantages/advantages* of withdrawing the term **Adult Literacy** (*or Literacy?*) from mainstream provision? **And consider what this means for Numeracy too.**

Each group will consider a different body of people in the current context:

- Group 1 answer the question for - Those who come to the classes
- Group 2 answer the question for - Those who teach or manage the teaching of the curriculum
- Group 3 answer the question for - those who sponsor/research/make policy input for the provision?

# Feedback (choose one delegate to feedback in only 3 minutes...)

- In reporting back to the workshop on what your group has identified as advantages and disadvantages bring in your own experiences and observations about the changes in Literacy and Numeracy in most recent years.
- Suggest any adjustments which your group would like to see take place in the current opportunities for adult basic skills learners.
- If you would like a copy of the notes from this event please leave us your e mail for further contact