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RaPAL

Open Edition



Journal

The Research and Practice in Adult Literacy Network

Who we are

RaPAL is an independent national network of learners, teachers, managers and researchers engaged in adult literacies and numeracy. Our support is generated by membership subscription only, and we are therefore completely independent in our views. RaPAL is the only national organisation focusing on the role of literacies in adult life.

What we do

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

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Editorial

Julie Meredith & Linda Pearce

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Linda is a Parent Support Coordinator at Plymouth Parent Partnership, an Independent Evaluator and a member of the RaPAL Editorial Group.

Welcome to this Open Edition of the Journal. We are delighted to have a range of contributions from learners, researchers and practitioners from different contexts. We are grateful to all those who have worked with us over the last few months and would particularly like to acknowledge the time and talent of illustrator Eleanor Shakespeare. Eleanor provided an illustration for an article and then kindly agreed to design the cover image.

Section 1

The opening article takes us to Senegal where **Elisabeth Gerger** investigates the mental calculation practices used in cooking and commerce by two different women. She invites us to draw parallels with the way maths is used in everyday life in the UK.

From everyday numeracy practices, we move to everyday literacy with a piece by **Amanda Easto**: *Joining a Library and Reading for Pleasure*. Amanda outlines three lessons that integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening. Her article is followed by contributions from **Marsha Allen** and **Terry Welham**, two students from her class. Marsha and Terry introduce themselves and then share their creative writing inspired by the shared reading of a short story.¹

Caroline Lewis then takes us from an Adult Education context back to secondary school. As more of us start to welcome younger students into Further Education (FE), her account of working as a Teaching Assistant with the 14+ age group is sure to be relevant. What are your expectations and/or preconceptions of teenagers?

"What you think of me, I will think of me. What I think of me, I will be."² Through poetry, **Colin Thomson** challenges us to think about the language we use that 'labels'. He echoes a point Caroline makes about taking the time to get to know people as individuals.

Someone who feels he is treated as an individual, and that his existing skills are recognised, is FE student **Luke Bartle**. In an open letter addressed to the Principal, he expresses his gratitude.

Section 2

The opening article in this section takes us inside a women's prison in England. "Power, status, values and attitudes towards writing and writers are all closely interconnected with each other, and with the questions of who writes about what and for whom, why this matters and why it is like this."³ **Heather Shakespeare** examines the value of teaching creative writing and considers what it has to offer that Functional Skills does not.

Dyslexia specialist **Karen Tobias-Green** stays with the topic of writing and considers the challenges that it holds for art and design students. She explores ways of engendering the level of confidence and excitement in written work that the students have for their practical, visual work.

From the ongoing challenges of teaching and learning, **Margot Walsh** addresses the mental and emotional upheaval of organisational change. Whether termed a restructure or rationalisation, experience of this process is increasingly common, but the impact is usually seen only in the outcome. Margot asks: "Does Emotion have a Role in Organisational Change?"

In the current instability and uncertainty, **Geraldine Murphy** argues for further research into digital literacy from the perspective of FE staff. She shares her findings from a small-scale survey of in-service trainee teachers. Before reading, you might like to consider your answers to two questions: What is literacy? What is digital literacy?

Reviews

This section opens with **Sue Grief's** review of *Grammar for Sentence Combining*:

1. Henry by Elizabeth Brassington: <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/19609/Henry-is-our-best-short-story.html>
 2. National Deaf Children's Society, in Coates, T. (2012). *Meanwhile I Keep Dancing*. Leicester: Action Deafness Books.
 3. Clark, R. & Ivanič, R. (1997:36) *The Politics of Writing*. London: Routledge.

Underpinning Knowledge for Adult Literacy Practitioners by Maxine Burton. Sue thinks this is of interest to both teachers and teacher educators. Readers who “missed out on grammar teaching or who feel the need to brush up” will find this is a good place to start. Practitioners who choose to give sentence combining a go, would be most welcome to share with Journal readers how a session on sentence combining works in practice.

Our second review continues with the subject of writing. **Doreen Chappell** reviews *Literacy and the Practice of Writing in the 19th Century: A Strange Blossoming of Spirit* by Ursula Howard. Via autobiographies and other personal accounts, Howard (2012:1) explores “why and how working-class people learned and practised writing and what their writing meant to them”. Doreen sees the relevance for practitioners and enthuses that “the ways in which people acquired their skills are an inspiration and reinforce innovative ideas”. Once the stresses of the summer term are over, you might wish to add this to your holiday reading list.

To close this Open Edition, **Yvonne Spare** shares her thoughts on *Adult Literacy and Development: Stories from the Field* by Alan Rogers and Brian Street. The authors analyse the differences between formal and informal learning, consider success stories from various communities, and identify reasons that education programmes fail. They then consider the implications for both policy and practice. Yvonne enjoyed the “stories from the field”, particularly those with illustrations making the context more vivid. She believes this work gives us all food for thought.

Please note that the views expressed by individual contributors to the Journal do not necessarily reflect those of RaPAL.



The illustrations on the cover and with *Beyond Functionality: Writing a Better Future* are by Eleanor Shakespeare.



Eleanor is an illustrator who graduated this year with First Class Honours from The University of the West of England, Bristol. For commissions or feedback, please contact her at **hello@eleanorshakespeare.com** or visit her website **eleanorshakespeare.com**

Mental Calculation Practice: Some Similarities between Strategies used in Senegal and the UK

Elisabeth Gerger

Elisabeth lives in the south of Senegal and works with a non-governmental organisation as coordinator for literacy projects in several Senegalese languages. The felt need of women to learn mathematical skills has led her to research the traditional numeracy practices of a people group in the south of Senegal. Her goal is to offer a numeracy programme for women in their own language.

Research has highlighted the fact that basically all ethnic groups have numerical systems (Crump 1990) and that the ability to count seems to be “intrinsic to being human” (Ascher 1991:6). Many traditional techniques, embedded in everyday cultural practices and often called “informal mathematics” or “street mathematics” (Nunes, Schliemann and Carraher 1993:3), include the use of concrete objects for arithmetical operations as well as mental calculation techniques. These researchers observed that many of these techniques are similar to those used by Western children. Reed and Lave (1981) emphasise the fact that mental calculation practices are found in all cultures, concluding that unschooled individuals have the capacity to calculate mentally, often with great aptitude. Estimation is a technique that is used widely by people with no formal schooling. Gay and Cole (1967) observed that the Kpelle people in Liberia were much better at estimating the number of stones in a pile than an American control group.

In this article I will describe estimation and mental calculation skills that I observed whilst participating in two events in Thionck-Essyl, a town in the south of Senegal. I observed estimation skills used in cooking a rice dish as well as mental calculation techniques employed by a market vendor who has never been to school. These examples are given in order to illustrate that some of the mental calculation strategies used in Senegal are very similar to those employed in the United Kingdom (UK), even if the context and the tasks involved might be very different.

Cooking a Meal

I spent a morning with Khady, a 36 year old mother of eight children, cooking a dish called 'etoj ekaama', rice with a sauce of ground peanuts and manioc leaves. She is one of the two wives of her husband in this community where polygamy is common. Khady and her co-wife take turns cooking for their husband, all their children and several other relatives who live with them, each woman cooking for two days in a row. The kitchen is a square house made out

of dried earth. We sit in the small square porch on little stools while cooking.

Khady tells me that the food has to be ready when the children come back from school, which is around 1pm. The exact time is not too important. Traditional measurement of time is mainly defined by nature, for example, the position of the sun. Around 10am (I check my watch), Khady sends a child to the market to buy ingredients for the sauce. Then she goes with me to a nearby garden to collect a bucket full of manioc leaves. Another child is sent to the pounding machine with them. Khady knows from daily practice what size pot to use for cooking, how much water to use for boiling the rice, how much of each ingredient to put into the sauce: three pots of rice, the ground manioc leaves, which after being pounded only cover the surface of the bucket, as well as a piece of dried fish and a piece of dried sea snail, several packets of peanuts that we grind using pestle and mortar, stock cubes, hot pepper, salt, shrimp powder etc. She also knows from experience how long the sauce needs to simmer.



Pounding peanuts for the sauce

When reflecting on cooking 'etoj ekaama' with Khady, I realised that she mainly used estimation skills. Time was measured approximately, and for measuring rice and other ingredients she used pots of various, not interrelated sizes, spoons and 'handfuls'. It struck me how women all over the world use similar techniques when cooking. Whilst most written recipes available in the UK measure quantities in grams or litres, experienced cooks often do not measure quantities using scales or tables. Daily practice and experience have taught them to estimate how much water to put into a pot, or the amount of spices to add in order to give the dish just the right flavour, and how much time to plan for the various ingredients to be just perfectly cooked.



Khady and her family eating 'etoj ekaama'

Selling Vegetables

Mental calculation techniques used in Senegal and the UK also show some similarities. Here is a short description of my participant observation with Mariama, a market vendor. I have spent several days observing her and asking questions about her mental calculation skills.



Mariama Sambou selling vegetables

Mariama sits under a mango tree on an upturned bucket behind her goods, which she has laid out on a plastic sheet on the ground. She is a market vendor, selling vegetables and other food items in small quantities. Women come to the market every day to buy just enough ingredients for the daily rice dish. Mariama has never been to school, but is amazingly able and swift to calculate mentally. She tells me that she has never taken a pen to calculate, but that she makes fewer mistakes than other people who do written calculations. She adds that she tries to avoid errors because it is she herself who has a problem if she miscalculates.

Amongst other goods, Mariama sells a dried fish called 'dëggërbopp'. She bought 1kg for 800 CFA¹ at a wholesaler in a nearby town. 1kg equals about 15 fish. First she sorts the fish. She sells the big ones for 100 CFA, the middle-sized ones for 75 CFA and the small ones for 50 CFA. She gives me an example: She sells 5 big fish at 100 CFA, which makes 500 CFA, as she tells me without hesitating. She has 10 fish left. Then she sells 4 medium-sized size fish at 75 CFA. For this she calculates in her head, "75 times 2 makes 150, and again 75 times 2 makes 150, so the total is 300 CFA". She has 6 small ones left, which she will sell for 50 CFA each. She calculates with 5. If she sells 5, she gets 250 CFA. The last one makes 50 CFA, so the total is 300 CFA. She calculates that 5 for 500 CFA and 4 for 300 CFA makes 800 CFA. 800 CFA is the price she paid for the kg, so she knows that the rest, the income from the 6 small fish, is her profit. Mariama is quick with simple mental additions. Multiplication strategies she has used here are memory (she knows the multiples of 100 by heart), doubling and doubling again instead of multiplying by 4 ($75 \times 2 + 75 \times 2$), using near numbers and adjusting (instead of calculating 6×50 , she calculates $5 \times 50 + 50$). Multiples of 5 are very much used in her culture and language, with 5 being one of the bases used and Senegalese money being based on 5.

Mariama also explains how she calculates her profit from selling onions. She sells them either per kg or individually. She buys a 25kg bag of onions for 7,500 CFA in the nearby town of Bignona. Transport costs one way are 200 CFA for the bag and 900 CFA for herself. She calculates only one way transport expenses into the cost of the onions, and the return trip she will calculate with the other goods she bought. When she gets home, she first weighs the bag with her scales. Sometimes there are 26 or 27kg in a bag. She weighs out a kilo at a time and then counts how many onions she has in each

1. 1,000 CFA francs equal £1.33 (8 March 2013), so 800 CFA is roughly £1.

kg. She gives me an example: There are 8 onions per kg. From experience she knows that she wants to sell the onions at 500 CFA per kg; I assume that she knows that this will give her enough profit while not being too expensive for her clients.

When calculating the total profit from a 25kg bag of onions, she calculates mentally 500 CFA times 20kg, which makes 10,000 CFA. The other 5kg in the bag will be sold for 500 CFA also, which makes a profit of 2,500 CFA. The total is 12,500 CFA, as she tells me without hesitating. She takes off the 7,500 CFA that she spent on buying the bag, which makes 5,000 CFA. Then she takes off the transport cost of 1,100 CFA, which leaves her with a profit of 3,900 CFA.

I observe that instead of calculating 25×500 CFA, she calculates $20 \times 500 + 5 \times 500$, splitting into tens and units and multiplying those separately.

Strategies Mariama uses include regrouping of concrete objects, counting and various mental calculation strategies. She is excellent at mental addition and subtraction, and does some multiplication, but often chooses to use multiple addition rather than multiplication, especially for higher numbers. She knows many calculations by heart, especially multiples of 5.

Conclusion

The context of selling vegetables or fish at a market and cooking a rice dish in a huge pot over an open fire in Senegal is very different from vegetables or fish being sold in a supermarket and food being cooked in the UK on a stove. Nevertheless, in everyday life many mathematical skills that are used are very similar. Estimation is a technique employed in cooking both by women in Senegal and the UK.

Mariama in Senegal uses similar mental calculation strategies to many people in the UK in order to solve everyday mathematical problems. Strategies like memory, doubling and doubling again instead of multiplying by 4, using near numbers and adjusting, using multiples of 5, splitting into tens and units and multiplying those separately, are listed and encouraged to be taught in the British Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum (The Basic Skills Agency 2001). I marvel at the human capacity for using mathematical skills like mental calculation and estimation to manage our lives and deal with everyday challenges.

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Section 1

Joining a Library and Reading for Pleasure

Amanda Easto

Amanda Easto is an Adult Literacy Tutor at Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT). She's been teaching there since 2007, and in that time she has worked with groups of adults of all levels from Entry 1 to Level 1. She has taught mixed level groups and some embedded literacy classes. Before training to be a teacher, she was a graphic designer. You can contact her at amanda.easto@btinternet.com

Introduction

I'd like to share an outline of three lessons, and then two profiles and short stories, which were written by two inspirational people in my Entry Level 3 class. I think their stories are great, and I hope you enjoy reading them.

I have used the following lesson format to introduce the topic of joining local libraries and reading for pleasure within Entry Level adult literacy groups for the past few years. I vary the tasks and resources used to suit the levels and interests of the groups. Usually these lessons coincide with a visit to a local library if it is possible to arrange. This is how the topic was used over three lessons with a group of 11 adult learners in an E3 literacy class in November 2012.

Lesson 1

1. Reading a news article, discussion and vocabulary

The group shared a news story about a library reading group. Learners each read a paragraph of text aloud, and then the group had a discussion about the article. The discussion was facilitated by topic cards. This was followed by a vocabulary activity that involved finding synonyms for words from the article, and looking up words in a dictionary.

News stories I have previously chosen have been about the closure of libraries, reading groups, homework clubs and the relocation of a local library. I have sourced news stories from the BBC website, and local and national newspapers. Usually, I copy and paste the text into a Word document, change and enlarge the font and add a picture or two to make the article more accessible to read. It doesn't take long to do!

2. Using the Internet to find information

Learners looked up information about local libraries on Croydon Council's website (Croydon.gov.uk). They worked in pairs, using a question sheet to find out about joining a library. The question sheet contained step-by-step instructions on how to log in to the website and access specific pages, as well as comprehension questions on the web pages. These question

sheets can be differentiated to suit learners' reading ability and confidence with using a computer. If no computers are available in the classroom, I would print off the web pages for the learners to use as information.

3. Homework and additional tasks

There were two tasks: filling in a form to join the library and putting the names of local libraries into alphabetical order.

Lesson 2

1. Group discussion on reading for pleasure

As it was not possible to arrange a library visit for this group, I brought in a selection of books from the local library for the learners to look at. The group then talked about their interests, the kind of books they read or would be interested in reading, and which books (from the selection) appealed to them from looking at the covers and reading the introductions.

2. Reading and talking about a short story

The group then shared a short story, each reading aloud in turn and stopping at intervals to discuss the story. The story chosen for this lesson was *Henry*¹ by Elizabeth Brassington. It is included in *The Sun Book of Short Stories*, which was one of the 2007 Quick Reads titles.

In brief, *Henry* is a short story told in the first person by a seemingly downtrodden, long-suffering husband. His wife buys an inflatable man to keep her company and fend off muggers when she is driving alone in her car. She is delighted with *Henry*, and it soon becomes apparent who she prefers. Her husband becomes more and more jealous of *Henry*, and eventually tries to destroy him.

3. Writing a response to the story, Henry.

Learners were given a writing task, as follows:

After you have read and discussed *Henry* by Elizabeth Brassington, choose one of the following options:

1. Retell the story from the point of view of the wife.

1. The full story is available here:
<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/19609/Henry-is-our-best-short-story.html>

2. Write a short review of the story explaining why you did or didn't like it.
3. Write a brief newspaper report about the end part of the story when Henry is on the church tower.
4. Write an advert to persuade people to buy an inflatable for their car.
5. Write your own short story about something or someone coming between friends, or a couple.

In the lesson the learners started to plan and draft their writing.

Lesson 3

1. Writing: finish first draft, proofread and produce a finished copy

Learners proofread their draft copies and then their work was checked by the tutor. Errors were highlighted, discussed and self-corrected where possible. Most of the learners in the group then typed a finished copy of their work on a computer.

At the end of the lesson, some learners volunteered to read their writing aloud to the group.

2. Homework and extension tasks: proofreading and spelling practice

For this group's homework, I copied and pasted some information about children's events at local libraries from Croydon's Council's website. I then added errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation for the learners to identify and correct. Learners were also asked to identify words in the text that follow the 'y to -ies' spelling rule (babies, activities) and add some more ('y to -ies') words of their own. The spelling task was used to recap on a previous lesson, in which plural spelling rules were introduced.

Section 1

About Me

Marsha Allen

My name is Marsha; I'm 36 and live in Croydon. I am a mother of 2 children; my son is 14 and my daughter is 9. I am the oldest of 3 children; I have a sister and a brother.

At the age of 5, I had a brain tumour and as a result of that I lost my vision. I am now what they call visually impaired, which means I have limited sight. I am restricted in most cases in what I can and cannot do, but I try not to let it get me down, however that is easier said than done – lol (laugh out loud)! For example, when the children want to go to various places which may be far away, and because I cannot drive, they tend to miss out on a lot of things, which can be very disheartening for everyone. This does get me down.

I decided to study English because I went for an

assessment to join a psychology course and was told I needed to get a higher level in English.

In my spare time I like to listen to music, sing (but I'm not that good at it!), spend time with the 'girls' and have a good catch up. I also like to cook for friends and family.

I used to work for a small catering company. Whilst there I helped to make desserts and helped to prepare some meals such as meat and veggie lasagne, soups, sandwiches etc. I worked there for over 3 years and was sad when they closed.

Writing Task

After you have read and discussed *Henry* by Elizabeth Brassington, retell the story from the point of view of the wife.

Henry

By Marsha Allen

My name is Marie and this is the story of how I met my husband and my life so far.

I met Mike 20 years ago; we met at work. I was a nurse and he was a doctor. We used to pass each other on the ward and sometimes we would sit together on our coffee or lunch breaks. He would always make me laugh or smile, and then one day he asked me out on a date, and as they say, the rest is history.

After a year of seeing each other, Mike proposed and we got married later that year.

Things were great for the first five years. In that time, I had given birth to two beautiful children, Harry and Charlotte, but I had to give up work to concentrate on being a good wife and mother.

I did resent Mike for going out to work every day and having a social life. He would often stay out after work and come home smelling of booze and cigarettes. We would often argue, and this would make me angry, being stuck at home all the time and not interacting with other people. All I wanted was some interaction with my husband, so he would sleep on the couch! I'm sure he was seeing someone, but he would never admit it, and this carried on until the kids left home a year ago.

I'm in my mid-40s now, working part-time as a receptionist in my local leisure centre. I would say I'm quite attractive, but have lost my confidence, so therefore a bit shy around people. I have been working for the last six months. It has given me a new lease of life and made me wonder what I have been missing out on socially and academically.

I hate spending time at home now with Mike. We don't talk or eat together, but occasionally we will sit and watch TV, him on his chair by the fire and me on the sofa.

I am so lonely; I just want someone to love and care for me as I will do for them. That is why I decided to look on the Internet and came across a site that had adult toys and blow-up dolls.

The dolls looked quite realistic on screen and I was curious to know more. Weird I know, but I just wanted a companion, someone to sit with and unload my problems to.

I decided to order a doll. He was gorgeous, dressed in a pale blue denim shirt with fitted

stonewashed jeans and white and blue Converse on his feet! He looked like the kind of guy who you'd meet in a bar or club and take home for the night. He had a nice face, chiselled features, nice bright sparkly eyes and a nice smiley mouth.

It took three days for Henry to arrive; that was his name. When the doorbell rang, my eyes lit up, and I had a smile on my face.

"What's on that big box?" said Mike.

"Just a little treat for myself," I said.

I rushed into the front room, put the box gently on the floor and went to get a knife from the kitchen.

Mike sat by the box as I pulled out Henry. He stood up and shouted, "What the hell is that?"

"He is a blow-up doll, and I want you to blow him up for me."

"What do you need that for?"

"His name is Henry, and I got him for company."

He laughed. "Are you going to sleep with him?"

"Well I don't know."

Mike got his bicycle pump and started to blow him up. His full height was 6'2" and he was delicious!

Mike didn't seem impressed but I didn't care. I had a warm feeling inside.

All in all, Henry lived with us for three months and it was great. I would take him out in the car after work or we would go for long drives at the weekends. He was just a companion for me. Mike was very jealous, I could tell, but I didn't care. I even got him a hat, scarf and glove set for Christmas. It was as if I had met a new man, except he couldn't walk or communicate back to me.

Then one day, everything changed. I had gone to work that day, and when I came home Mike and Henry were not there! I started to call their names, but nobody answered. I checked all the rooms and my heart started to race. "Where the hell are they?" I said.

I put my coat back on, picked up my bag, ran off to my car and sped off.

As I drove in the dark a few miles down the road, I heard and saw people shouting and pointing at the church roof! There was a man, and he looked like he was going to jump! So I got out of my car to have a look. I started to walk closer. I saw the man. He was wearing the same scarf as Henry. I could see it blowing in the wind. As I got closer to the church, I realised it was Henry and my heart sank and I knew he wouldn't be coming home again.

As for Mike and I, things are a lot better now. He moved out and I found myself a real man.

About Me

Terry Welham

I got my head injury on 17 April 2005 when I was 21. It was my step brother Gary's birthday and we had arranged to go out in Beckenham to celebrate. We were in a bar called O'Neil's and we were having a good drink. I got talking to this young lady and we kissed.

When me and Gary and our friends left, this guy followed us and hit me from behind and knocked me out. He was that girl's boyfriend.

I was knocked out in King's College Hospital for two weeks, and when I came round, they sent me to a hospital closer to home, Mayday Hospital. I spent six months in there, and when I went home I went to rehab to learn to do things again. When I got better, I had to go to a driving school to get my licence back, as it was suspended after my head injury.

After some time passed, my leg got worse and I knew I could not go back to my old job, which was roofing.

I wanted to work in an office but I needed to improve on my English after not going to school when I was younger. So I got into a college in South Norwood. I was there for two terms and I passed E3 English, and now I have gone on to do Level 1.

Writing Task

After you have read and discussed *Henry* by Elizabeth Brassington, write your own short story about something or someone coming between friends, or a couple.

Tierry Henry

By Terry Welham

My name is Jake Summers and I moved up to Liverpool to start a new office job from West London.

The year is 2008. I start my new job next week so it gives me a chance to unpack and settle in till I start my new job.

I have not got many friends up here but I love my football and I watch it on TV because I don't live near my team Chelsea. I've got my Sky Sports deal sorted up here. I used to watch them all the time at Stamford Bridge [Chelsea] and I had a season ticket. They are playing in the FA Cup Final on Saturday against Liverpool which is weird!

Now I have no one to watch it with and I am thinking of getting this blow up doll called Henry so I am not sitting on my own. I was looking online and I ordered this doll, and it should get here before the game starts.

It arrives and I unpack it out of the box. It only took two days to get here. I dress Henry and put a Chelsea shirt, shorts, socks and scarf on him and he looks well dressed for the game.

The day of the FA cup final arrives. The FA Cup final kicks off, I know Henry is not real but it is so exciting. We are playing Liverpool in the Final and I moved up here. Chelsea had a corner and they scored, the scorer was John Terry. I celebrate with Henry. I am hugging him and spinning him around and around. They go on to win the final 1-0 and lift the FA Cup and me and Henry are celebrating and I get a little drunk.

I start work a week later on Monday it goes really well. I make friends with two guys called Dennis and Steve and I invite them round that night and they accept at seven o'clock. I've just got in and it is five o'clock, Henry is sitting on the sofa with his Chelsea stuff still on from Saturday. I am so proud of him and happy with my team. I have my dinner and get showered and dressed ready for Dennis and Steve.

The door buzzes and I buzz them up. They come in and I make them a tea and they sit down next to Henry. Dennis says, "What is that doll?" and I reply, "That is Henry" and Steve says, "Why is he wearing that kit?" and I reply "that is our team".

Steve says, "We are Liverpool and I was not happy what happened on Saturday". I reply "It is only a game and we were the better team on the day".

Steve did not look happy with that comment. I went to toilet and came back in the room and Henry had a pen stuck in his head. I said "What have you done guys?" Dennis replied "I was not happy with your comment about Liverpool" and I said "It's only a game, I think you'd better leave!" Steve said "OK, fine, we will!" and they left.

Henry looks dead to me and deflated with a pen stuck in his head so I take the Chelsea stuff off him and put him in the bin.

I went into work the next day and on my desk was another Henry and Dennis and Steve said sorry and it was all water under the bridge. I got back home and unpacked the new Henry. I pumped him up and put the Chelsea kit and scarf back on him and placed him on the sofa.

Steve and Dennis popped round and gave me a bottle of wine and said sorry. When they left I walked back in the front room and Henry was wearing a Liverpool jersey. There was a note on him 'I am a Liverpool fan now haha!!'

The end

Section 1

The Wonderful World of a Teaching Assistant

Caroline Lewis

Caroline is a Teaching Assistant in the English Faculty at a comprehensive in England. She has been in her post for over 18 months and is now considering teacher training.

As the mother of two boys diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), I believed I'd witnessed most behaviour until I started work as a Teaching Assistant (TA), that is. Suddenly my boys looked quite 'normal'.

Looking back, I believe I had quite positive expectations of what being a TA would be; I'd only get really nice young people to support who would instantly love me and I would be super confident and know all the right things to say. But the 'rabbit caught in headlights' moment came very early on, as did the panicky thought, "Whatever made me think I could do this?", as they piled through the door shouting and pushing; stopping briefly to stare at me.

"You're new," said one boy who then, without missing a beat, started singing a love song (opera style) to me. He then stopped as abruptly as he had started and said, "You need to know I have anger issues, Miss!"

I wasn't quite sure what to say to that, but got a nice feeling from my first "Miss".

I was truly shocked by the behaviour though: rolling over tables, disrespecting the teacher and one boy was even gouging a hole in the wall. When I was at school (a good 30 years ago) you were terrified to breathe or move without instruction from the teacher and you certainly never answered back. It was going to take a while to acclimatise to this sort of school life.

The relationships I have with all the teachers I accompany have been good from the start and, as a complete novice, I was particularly grateful for that in the early days. They steered me right and have always been encouraging. I know TAs at other schools who are not as happy so I realise I have been lucky, and remain so.

I've been in the role for over 18 months now and although I am no longer shocked or surprised by anything, the futility of some of the behaviour is beginning to frustrate and irritate. "Why are you acting like this?" is something I find myself saying on a regular basis and it's not just because I should say it. It's because you truly do find yourself really caring about every single one

of the youngsters; the 'good', the 'bad' and the indifferent (the latter group sadly the biggest). This question is usually responded to with a shrug of the shoulders and a curled lip. No real reason is given as none really exists. Apathy is really hard to deal with and the shame of it is that it is only in the last stages of Year 10 (age 14-15) that some of this latter group start to understand the importance of their education.

Recently, some former pupils came back for a visit which really surprised me as they couldn't wait to get away last year! Not only was I not expecting to see them back but they admitted to missing the place and wished they'd listened and tried harder. Aargh!

The important thing to remember in this role is that although the pupils just seem like a sea of faces or a tidal wave of bodies that jostle you along the corridor between lessons, they are individual human beings: some with a back story that would break your heart; some who have had to be up early to care for parents before school; some in uniforms that have clearly never seen a washing machine. It's a wonder that some of them even make it to school at all. But they do.

From time to time, when behaviour isn't great or grades don't impress, you need to take the time to ask if they are OK; a little bit of concern can go a long way. Two words of warning though: firstly, don't go barging in feet first with anything too direct as nine times out of ten the individual clams up and nothing is gained. Secondly, just because a child has opened up and chatted to you today, don't expect the same intimacy tomorrow; they change like the wind. I learned that very quickly and it is really easy to get hurt by the change in attitude towards you, so a thick skin becomes a 'must-have' item.

What were, in the beginning, vast numbers of faces whose names I thought I would never remember, have now become perfectly individual pupils with names and personalities and it's been a pleasure (mostly) to get to know them all. That 'rabbit caught in the headlights' wouldn't change a thing.

Section 1

A Poem

Colin Thomson

Colin is a family support worker and freelance British Sign Language and Deaf Awareness trainer. He is also a signed singer, and was possibly one of the first in the UK when he performed for the first time over 35 years ago. He has performed on the BBC's See Hear ¹ and at various Deaf events. In Sign Singer ², Colin describes how this passion began and how his versions of songs can relate specifically to the deaf experience. He is the fourth generation of deafness in his family, his son being the fifth.

Labels

Do you see me or the labels given to me
So kindly by society? Do I fit into a category
Deaf or hearing?

You see I'm still trying to find my identity

Did anyone stop to think
Oh you're deaf let me buy you a drink
Does anyone even care?
The labels you learnt, the scars are still there

We're all born with a clean slate
We all start with a fresh mind
We all want to integrate
But your labels leave me behind
Suppose I am a different kind

Yes we all learn to explore
We learn to love, even hate
I wanted to learn even more
But your labels closed the door

If I spoke would you understand?
Would you be offended
If I use my hands?
It's what nature intended

My hearing aid is for you
To help you get through
I don't understand a word you say
I look for clues on your face
But you just turned away
Gave me a new label today

Deaf, part hearing, hearing impaired
Do you ever ask me or have you ever cared?
Sign this form, bus travel for free
So now you tell me it is a disability
When we say it's a language minority

If you can hear are you deaf impaired?
Does a label give you identity
Or tie you down, instead of setting you free
If only you would take the time
To communicate with me and share my mind

Labels are part of history
So open up your mind and set me free.



With thanks to you know who.

1. See *Hear* is a weekly magazine programme on BBC2 highlighting issues that affect people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

2. Thomson, C. (1991). 'Sign Singer' in Taylor, G. and Bishop, J. (eds). *Being Deaf: The Experience of Deafness*. London: Pinter Publishers in association with The Open University.

Section 1**Youthful Inexperience****Luke Bartle**

Luke is a Level 1 student at college in West Yorkshire who has ambitions to be a writer. His favourite authors are Agatha Christie, Dennis Wheatley and Gaston Leroux.

7th May 2013

Dear Principal

I am writing to you to tell you about my experience at College and how much I have improved whilst being here.

Ever since I was young I have always had a creative mind even if it was doing Art or doing creative writing in English, but when I was studying at High School we did not have the useful resources to learn more or to give us the confidence to push our skills further. I have always had a dream of writing stories and being an author, but while I was at High School I pushed the idea aside until years later. I was unsure because everything was virtually the same, both in learning and the way staff taught us.

When I first arrived at College I was uncertain about what the years would bring, although I was fully aware of what I wanted to do. I knew I would have to go through many stages at College until I could reach my goal. So far I have managed much better in my lessons more than I could have ever expected, in both Art and Design and English. My understanding of what Tutors have asked me to do has also improved over the years.

The learning resources at College are much better than what I had in High School and the way teachers support and encourage students cannot be beaten. There is a different approach in how tutors are. They take on board my existing skills and this helps me take it more seriously as they obviously want me to gain a better education and experience. It makes me more confident as the staff are more engaging and show respect.

I would like to thank everyone at College for the support I have been given.

Yours sincerely

Luke Bartle

Beyond Functionality: Writing for a Better Future

Heather Shakespeare

Heather has been teaching in adult education and community learning for 15 years. Her roles have included delivering Skills for Life and family learning courses, initial teacher training, placement mentoring and additional learning support. She currently works in offender learning and can be contacted at heather_shakespeare@blueyonder.co.uk

"Learning to write, even reasonably well, gives fluency to the rest of life." This statement would surely resonate with every literacy teacher, but was made by acclaimed writer and university professor Jeanette Winterson in an article on the value of creative writing courses in higher education.¹ Like Winterson, I teach creative writing, though in a decidedly less glamorous context and, alas, with very few of her credentials. Yet working in a women's prison, I encounter many people who desperately need fluency in their lives. I also see that this need might in part be met by learning to write, not just for functional purposes, but also creatively. In delivering both Functional Skills and creative writing courses, I have become aware that whilst one is considered to be of pivotal importance and fundamental to employability and rehabilitation, the other is more likely to be seen by those who determine policy or deliver services as softer, less serious, and very much an optional extra. This article examines the value of teaching creative writing in a custodial setting, its challenges and rewards, and what it has to offer that Functional Skills does not.

It is about 18 months since the creative writing course was introduced in the prison where I work. During that period, I have delivered the course seven times with minor adjustments at each stage. The target qualification is the Certificate in Developing Creative Writing Skills at either Level 1 or Level 2, which is awarded by the National Open College Network with a recommended length of 30 guided learning hours, though this has not always been strictly adhered to.

What, then, was the rationale for delivering such a course? Prison is a particularly fertile environment for writing. A student once asked me why I think people write more in prison. My answer focused on the confluence of factors which is, arguably, peculiar to this place: seemingly endless time, enforced solitude, personal crisis and emotional intensity, any of which could be a catalyst for writing. But I might also have talked of the disempowerment which goes hand in hand with incarceration, the divestment of virtually all responsibilities, and the common struggle to at once make sense of

what is often a fractured past and tentatively contemplate what shape the future might take. From this melting pot, immensely powerful writing can and does emerge. Yet it is not only the product which has significance. The process of writing can be equally powerful and has the potential, I believe, to make a significant difference to a prisoner's time inside.

Not least, writing can make life in prison more tolerable, even worthwhile. A number of my learners have described the release it gives, as through the creative process they begin to explore and externalise the mix and mess of their thinking and experience, and hopefully work towards greater understanding and more effective management of their emotions. One learner, who battled constantly with self-harm, said that the creative writing course had encouraged her to use writing "as a release for pent up emotions that I can't talk about". Another, who had struggled with addictive behaviours throughout her adult life, described the course as "a powerful therapeutic tool for me", in the context of detoxing from Subutex (a heroin substitute) and giving up smoking. For some, creative writing also brings an unexpected sense of liberation as they discover, within the confines of their circumstances, the unlimited scope of the imagination. One learner spoke of the course as "very liberating", an "out of prison experience".

It can also make prison a more productive place, providing a purposeful and fruitful activity not only in the classroom, but also for the hours the women spend alone "behind the door". On the back of this can come an enormous sense of achievement. Many times I have observed the palpable satisfaction as learners finish a piece of writing they have agonised over, particularly when they have an outlet through which to share it. They have something tangible to show for their efforts, something which did not exist the week before, something new and unique amidst the homogeneity of prison life. And, in a place where they have so little control, this can provide that genuine feeling of empowerment which is critical to effective rehabilitation and citizenship.

1. Winterson, J. (2012). *Jeanette Winterson: teaching creative writing*. Guardian News and Media Limited. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/may/18/jeanette-winterson-teaching-creative-writing> (accessed 1/5/13)



Illustration: Eleanor Shakespeare
<http://eleanorshakespeare.com/>

The learners' urge to pass on what they have written is often very strong and drives the text-sharing process which can play such a vital role in building and maintaining relationships, both within the prison and with those outside. I have often been asked for 'an extra copy' for a relative or friend, most poignantly perhaps by a young woman who had bravely written for the first time about the fatal stabbing of her younger brother several years before and then requested a copy to send home to her mother. But there is also the sharing of writing which goes on in the classroom as women evaluate one another's work and provide essential encouragement and validation. An asylum seeker who, during her first class, wrote tearfully about her horrendous experiences of war clearly derived great strength, as well as the confidence to continue writing, from the positive response of other learners.

Interestingly, this sharing process also occurs on the wings and elsewhere in the prison, where poems and stories are handed to other prisoners and even officers and civilian staff for comment. Meanwhile, in the writers' group we set up to provide progression for those completing the higher level course, a small group of women meet fortnightly and work together autonomously discussing ideas, critiquing first drafts and collaborating on writing projects.

In all of these contexts, these reading and writing communities, the writer's voice is heard, either audibly or in the reader's head, and this is hugely important in an environment where many feel that they have been silenced. Another related local initiative, Words Aloud, has taken this further by providing an open-mic forum in which women can read their work to a wider audience. The atmosphere at the first of these events, held last Christmas, was unforgettable as the women egged one another on, read poems for writers too nervous to read aloud and applauded each other's performances with unbridled enthusiasm. It felt unpredictable, risky even, but therein lay its value: it was spontaneous, organic and wholly democratic. Further afield, some have also had their writing recognised in national competitions, which has not only increased their confidence and motivation, but also fostered links with the world to which they will eventually return.

So how might creative writing help to secure a better future for prisoners, as well as improving their present experience? When one learner asked if the creative writing qualification would get her a job as a writer, I had to admit that it wouldn't. What I went on to explain, however, was that the skills she would develop through the course could enhance her wider employability prospects. This particular learner found it very difficult to consider others' views and perspectives; her need for affirmation and approval prevented her from accepting any feedback that was not altogether favourable. I suspect the issues underlying this were many and complex, certainly far more than any one course could resolve, but responding positively to constructive criticism is one of the criteria learners must demonstrate in their portfolio and, surely, an essential requirement for any employee. Interestingly, one American jobs website highlights the need for this type of skill, stating that, "Companies value soft skills because research suggests and experience shows that they can be just as important an indicator of job performance as hard skills."²

In terms of personal and social development, the process of writing and sharing writing with others can, I suggest, heighten sensitivity, develop emotional literacy and increase the capacity to empathise. It can be a potent force in changing our perception, both of ourselves and of whatever world we find ourselves in.

In their evaluation of the Writers in Prison Network,³ an organisation formerly funded by the Arts Council to place professional writers

2. <http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2009/01/26/top-10-soft-skills-for-job-hunters/> (accessed 13 April 2013)

3. <http://www.writersinprisonnetwork.org/>

alongside prisoners, researchers at Sheffield Hallam University cite the findings of a study from New Zealand, which explored the process of desistance from crime by ex-offenders.⁴ They noted "that the difference between those who were 'going straight' and those that were not, lay not in the circumstances of their lives, but rather in the way people interpreted their lives".⁵ Desistance was seen to be linked to cognitive rather than circumstantial change. So if, in the context of ongoing attempts to cut recidivism, creative writing can contribute to that perceptual and attitudinal shift, surely it should be given greater priority in offender learning programmes.

Delivering this type of course is not, however, always straightforward. To convince people, both prisoners and staff, of its value can be a challenge in itself. In spite of repeated and varied attempts to promote the course, recruitment has at times been a struggle, due in part to it being perceived by some as "a niche course", to use the phrase of one learner who was particularly keen to widen participation. Other obstacles have been a misunderstanding of what the course offers (one learner turned up expecting to learn calligraphy!), the view amongst those already writing poetry that it is unnecessary, and a fear of not being able to write well enough.

Another issue has been the difficulty of marrying its therapeutic possibilities with the need for tuition towards specified learning outcomes within a set timeframe. For the course to be viable, the completion of the learner's portfolio has to be the priority, but on occasions this has felt like a distraction from something more significant, and the imposed course end like a crude interruption to something which has only just begun.

Providing a safe, consistent and supportive environment in which people can write about their lives is also difficult, especially in a prison. The need to take on new learners once the course is underway in order to meet data requirements can shift the dynamic of a group and unsettle those who are beginning to forge a rapport with one another. At the opposite extreme, I have had to accommodate learners who could barely be in the same room together after a series of disputes on the wings, and whose animosity intensified when one allegedly stole the other's handwritten short story and destroyed it out of spite.

Yet these problems are far outweighed by the observed benefits. My intention here has been to highlight the 'soft skills' which the creative writing course builds, its therapeutic potential and its value in promoting writing beyond the classroom in a way Functional Skills in its utilitarianism never will.

But does the course have enough functionality to justify its existence in a climate in which budgets are squeezed and core skills given priority? Whilst not overtly prioritising areas like spelling, punctuation and grammar, it nonetheless seeks to develop other essential aspects of literacy. When asked in a course evaluation to identify what skills they had developed during the course, learners included such things as planning and structuring writing, consideration of audience, vocabulary extension, effective description and communicating meaning, all of which are vital to the writing process.

There is, in my view, so much more to literacy than functionality. I confess to finding the Functional Skills exams mildly depressing, focusing as they do on writing letters to the council about broken paving slabs or finding a pest control company to eliminate cockroaches, important though these things might be. What is so exciting about teaching creative writing is that, despite the need to meet set learning outcomes, it does not for the most part feel like merely an academic exercise designed to measure a learner's ability or increase their employability, however that may be interpreted.

Overwhelmingly, women come onto the creative writing course with something they want to say. Sometimes it takes them several weeks to work out what it is, and occasionally they say it before they are ready and then draw back because it is simply too raw. But whether it is a poem or an autobiographical piece thinly disguised as a short story, what they write is self-generated, a statement they wish to make which often has great personal significance. It is my privilege to help them do that.

4. Leibrich, J. (1993). *Straight to the Point: Angles on Giving Up Crime*. Dunedin: Otago University Press.

5. Albertson, K. and O'Keeffe, C. (2012) *The Good Days are Amazing - An Evaluation of the Writers in Prison Network*. Sheffield Hallam University

Visual Language and Written Language: Forging Links for Students with Dyslexia

Karen Tobias-Green

Karen is a dyslexia specialist teacher at Leeds College of Art and a published fiction writer. She is undertaking research into the attitudes of students with dyslexia to the process and purpose of writing in art and design. She is committed to access to literacy, to the pursuit of academic excellence for all and to the active participation of students in the development of their critical thinking.

This article arose out of a piece of ongoing research: *Exploring the attitudes of art and design students with dyslexia to the concept of writing as part of the creative process*. Art and design courses, at Higher Education (HE) level in particular, often include large elements of written work and textual analysis. For students with dyslexia, this can be a daunting prospect. This research aims to explore attitudes to writing, promote the concept of writing as part of the creative process and use visual strengths to support and develop writing.

Many of the issues facing dyslexic students are similar to those facing any adult with literacy issues. This can mean that dyslexic students are sometimes mistakenly and unfairly seen as a privileged cohort due to the support they receive. However, students with dyslexia very often experience additional difficulties regarding speed of processing information (affecting reading) and speed and accuracy of reproducing information (affecting writing), as well as issues with short-term memory, concentration, visual stress and word retrieval.

Dyslexia is no indicator of intelligence, but in a culture which values reading and writing skills it can present a view of a student's ability which is not commensurate with their actual underlying skills, intellectual ability and intelligence¹. In addition to the many students with dyslexic traits who remain undiagnosed, a proportion of the students we see here at Leeds College of Art (LCA) are mature students and students who have followed non-linear routes into HE, perhaps after access courses or through returning to education after a prolonged break, and it is important that we do not make assumptions about students' past educational experiences.

My own institution is working hard to address these barriers by converging theory and practice in an exciting way through bringing together

visual and written language. As a dyslexia specialist tutor at LCA, my work involves encouraging the synthesis of visual and written language into a variety of forms to support student progress on their art degree courses. Sometimes to their initial horror, art students are required to produce quite a lot of written work: analyses of their own and others' work, annotations of sketchbooks, academic essays, reflective and exploratory writing and other more formal, researched work evidencing critical thinking skills.

As part of a wider research project and in order to inform my teaching, I have interviewed 18 undergraduates with dyslexia about their experiences of writing in art and design. For many there is a disparity between the confidence and excitement with which they approach their practical, visual work and the sometimes wary, anxious approach they bring to their writing. In many cases this is partly informed by earlier educational experiences.

However, and again perhaps in contradiction to popular assumptions, there is often a genuine desire to have access to academic conventions and the language of critical thought.

"It gives you a contextual understanding, a platform, a foundation to build your work on. It improves so many skills as far as understanding and articulating your ideas goes, being able to communicate them, being able to understand them yourself." (Lana, Visual Communications student)

In response to the question, "How and where do you create?" student S responded, "When making art work I feel that my most creative and energetic moments can be in the evenings." Responding to the question, "When do you write?" she said,

1. Intellectual ability in this context is a term used by educational psychologists. It is something measurable through a battery of tests and is often used to compare with the speed and accuracy of processing. It can be measured through aptitude with words, but also through aptitude with objects, patterns and visual representations so it doesn't restrict itself simply to language-based tasks. Many students with dyslexia excel at the visuo-spatial tasks. Intelligence is used here to mean the ability to acquire and apply skills and knowledge, and is therefore a much broader term. Students with dyslexia are often very intelligent even if their intellectual ability is compromised through dyslexia.

"I must start my writing in the mornings, preferably around 9.30am in order for me to get into a routine and for a productive day. I feel that I am a slow worker and if I can utilise my whole day from morning to evening then I will get more done than if I start at random times." (Stephanie, Art and Design Interdisciplinary student)

The imperative 'must' along with the sense that writing is a laborious process and must be allowed a good deal of time to be achieved is evident, and contrasts with the adjectives creative and energetic. However, when asked, "Do you ever write your ideas down before you start the creative process?" Her response was, "I always write down my thoughts in order to create a connection between the idea and the concept."

Here there is arguably a unity of purpose; the words and the creative thoughts work together, and the writing down of the creative impulse somehow captures it, frames it and makes it real. Hall (1997) in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* talks about how representation is the production of meaning through language. We make our world real through the words we use to describe it, but we also use words to symbolise, substitute for, contrast with, argue against, support, explore, dissect, discuss, analyse and reorder our world. Words are our tools of negotiating the landscape of our lives and art is the visual representation of this landscape.

This student also referred to the value of analysis and research, to the process of giving advice to others and to the value of standing back from her work to look at it in a broader context. Literacy gives us access to all these opportunities. Many students with dyslexia often work with the use of assistive software which reads scanned text aloud. The opportunity to watch and listen to podcasts, DVDs and TV broadcasts provides alternative ways of accessing information and cuts across some of the literacy issues raised by dyslexia.

Another respondent in her late 20s talked about how the motivation for her art work "comes from the 'joy' of doing it" and another, when asked, "How do you feel when you want to start making something?" replied, "Certain... that's what I want to do."

When asked, "How do you feel about having to produce varied and complex written work on an art and design degree course?" the following replies were given:

"It helps that the writing is connected to a subject you have chosen and enjoy." (A Creative Advertising student)

"Writing is intrinsic to my main course. I expected to read and write at degree level." (Ed, Art and Design Interdisciplinary student)

When asked, "What makes writing meaningful as part of the creative process?" the following responses were made:

"A piece of writing became meaningful when it became relevant to my subject area." (Rebecca, Creative Advertising student)

"A piece of writing became meaningful when it involved discussing, sharing ideas and looking at the visual together. Human interaction [between tutor and student] also helps." (Steph, Creative Advertising student)

"A piece of writing becomes helpful in terms of forging links between sketchbook work and contextual studies it helps me understand my strengths in my work - how to set out a sketchbook, how to put things across, learning how work is marked." (Amy, Art and Design Interdisciplinary student)

"Words can affect you emotionally - they are precise, can direct your emotional response, words and pictures work together. Art is for a reason therefore needs to be rationalised and discussed/read about/written about." (Ed, Art and Design Interdisciplinary student)

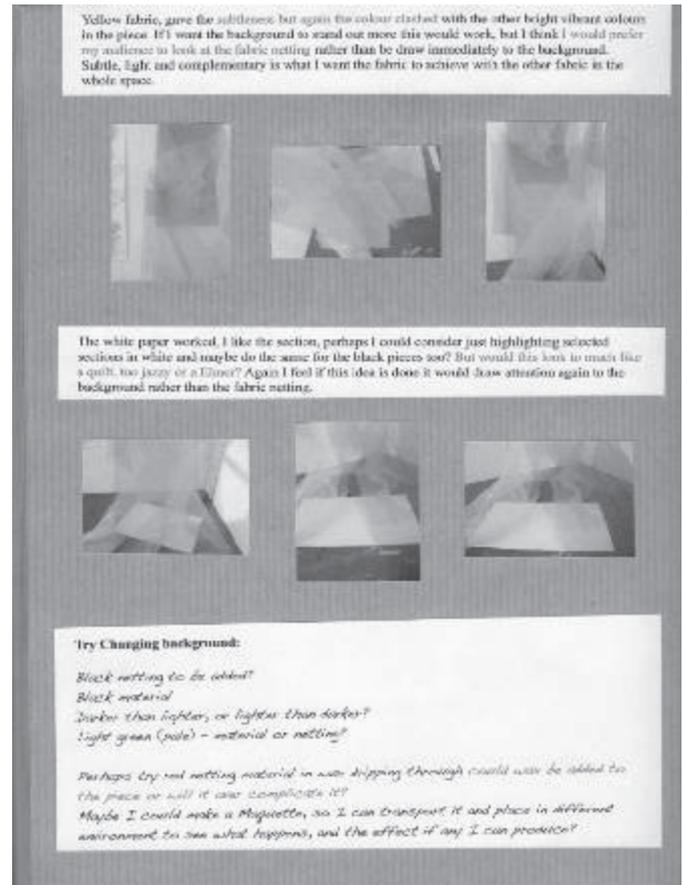
"Does completing a dissertation make me a better artist? I guess it will. It has a lot in common. Reading is about taking things in, processing ideas, writing is about making something new, giving out, expressing." (Cecilia, Art and Design Interdisciplinary student)

The nature of the work I do with students involves using dyslexia teaching strategies: breaking tasks down then rebuilding into a coherent whole; exploring the meaning of words in different contexts; giving students the ownership of language through being able to spell, pronounce, understand and effectively place a word or sentence or phrase to make it say what they want it to say. A publication which has been very helpful in this regard is Pat Francis's (2009) *Inspiring Writing in Art and Design: Taking a Line for a Write*, which "nurtures writing's creative role in the process of art and design" (back cover). Francis proposes 'warm up' exercises to get writing started and promotes the philosophy that, as art is also built

up from smaller visual impulses, so can writing be. In the same way that students with dyslexia are encouraged to learn through deconstruction and reconstruction so can art be produced and so can writing be achieved. A student struggling with her writing then follows some of the exercises that introduce visual language and formal writing as set out in Francis's (2009: 29) book and discovers:

"Oh I can do bits, oh I can do that. The relief was palpable. You can join up the bits later. You can work, re-adjust, later."

An example from my own teaching is Catherine, a student in the 3rd year of her Fine Art degree course who was diagnosed with dyslexia in 2010. Catherine has been attending sessions with me for 3 years and has just completed an 8,000 word dissertation. Below are some pages from an earlier sketchbook where she has begun to break down both visually and in words the thought processes and design ideas that led her to produce, discuss and analyse her art work. It was she who provided me with one of the most memorable responses to my survey: "Writing carries on where the art leaves off."



On this page, the student uses her sketchbook as a way of having a dialogue with herself. When writing becomes a conversation rather than a monologue, it can be part of the expressive, creative process.

Conclusion

The conclusion to this article is the beginning, for me, of a long process of research. It seems clear, however, that there is an exciting and fruitful collaboration to be achieved between visual and textual language, and that there are many positive ways for students with dyslexia to forge links between the opportunities offered by both words and images.

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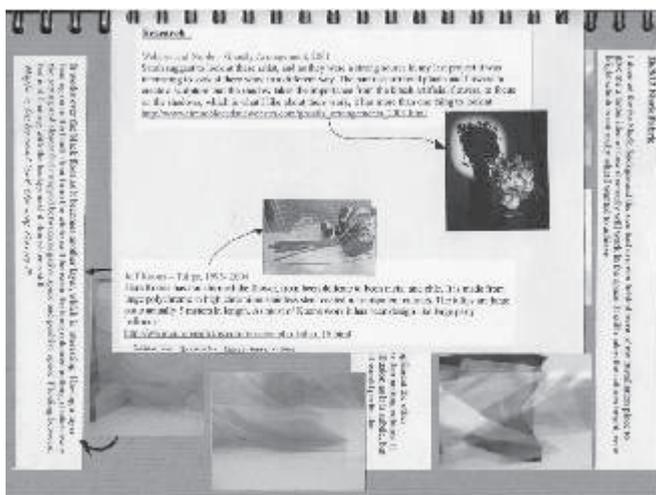
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Catherine Ireland, BA Fine Art year 3



Here the student has used arrows, underlining, coloured fonts and overlapping images to emphasise her thought processes and illustrate the visuo-textual links she is making.

The Digital Literacy Project: Initial Responses from Trainee Teachers

Geraldine Murphy

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Context

Literacy research within the lifelong learning sector has mainly focused on the experiences of the recipients of Further Education (FE) (Kendall & McGrath, in press) or the practices of literacy within the cultural and contextual environments of the FE landscape (Mannon & Ivanič 2007; Miller et al 2007; Ivanič 2009, cited in Kendall & McGrath, in press). There is a lack of attention to research in digital literacy from the perspective of the teachers currently working within FE in the UK. As this is an under-researched area we have no clear picture of any dominant or competing discourses, nor do we understand how they are framed or constructed by policy and how they are played out within an FE context.

Literacy studies offers us a useful way to examine what it means to live, learn and work within a digital society. Literacy relates to real-life needs and as a means to participate within the world (Barton 2000), either through established and traditional media or in new and innovative digital ways. The understanding of digital literacy among educators is confused; the awkward coupling of 'digital' and 'literacy' has shaped the contentious nature of the phrase, its position in the formal curriculum and in educational policy (Buckingham 2008).

A clearer understanding of new communication practices and the concept of digital literacy has never been so important. It is essential that teachers are supported in their own development and understanding of digital technology so that they are confident to embed digital literacy in their teaching. We are in a time of change, as Merchant (2007) suggests, a clearer understanding of the word literacy in a world of new communications is needed in order to re-align the curriculum with changes in society. As March (2008) acknowledges, the increasingly embedded nature of technology and the 'messiness' of digital technologies and how they interact and intersect with daily life will continue to shape the future of how people work, live and communicate within a globally networked society (JISC 2009).

Current research into digital literacy provides mounting evidence of the benefit of digital literacy when employed in an educational setting, although it has yet to be formally recognised by policy makers. Arguably, the promotion of digital literacy onto the policy agenda could add value to current educational initiatives. Digital literacy could enhance the professionalism of the sector, promote an inclusive approach to the development and training of educators and empower teachers to explore new ways to engage with their students and add value to their learning experiences.

However, this work arrives at a time when statutory qualification regulations look likely to be revoked. Change in how teachers are to be trained and gain qualifications in work within the sector is imminent, and the sector is awaiting new guidance on the future of teacher training and regulatory arrangements.

With regard to digital literacy policy, the terrain of the sector is highly fragmented; institutions under the current regulations are able to implement their own digital literacy policies, leading to an inconsistent approach to the training and support of staff.

Methodology

This report provides an initial discursive analysis of qualitative data gathered from a small-scale survey of a group of in-service trainee teachers in their understanding of digital literacy. It forms part of a larger body of work that aims to examine the understanding of digital literacy among teachers working within the FE sector in the West Midlands. Through this work I hope to open up a sector-specific discussion of digital literacy and to promote further research in this area.

This work utilises Gee's (1997) approach to discourse analysis to investigate the situated meanings of the participants to illustrate the discourses of digital literacy that resonate within teachers working in FE. The pilot group consisted of 9 first-year part-time Post Compulsory Education and Training teachers, with a range of teaching experience and subject specialisms.

What is Literacy?

To open up the discussion of digital literacy, it was important to first explore the situated meanings of the term 'literacy'. The sample were asked to critically reflect on what they thought 'literacy' to be, to begin to build a view on how literacy is understood generally and within the context in which the sample both work and learn.

From the data gathered, there is a clear indication that the most dominant understanding of literacy was heavily influenced by reading. Moreover, the use of the word 'reading' as a precursor for 'literacy' is prolific across the responses. When asked to reflect on the types of skills and abilities associated with the term 'literacy', the situated meanings of the sample made reference to traditional notions of literacy, particularly within print-based media. The acts of reading, writing and speaking were skills that were highly relevant in the acquisition of literacy, the skills of 'reading' that dominated the discourses associated with 'literacy' were again most prevalent.

The dominance of the act of reading and the importance that reading skills are given by the sample is highlighted further by the suggestion that other skills are not possible without a level of reading ability. One response proposed that "all skills and abilities are associated with literacy as everyday functions are hard to do without the ability to read". This type of response indicates that, for these trainee teachers, literacy is viewed as something akin to a baseline from which other abilities can be learnt, and in this sense could be described as an everyday skill. Another respondent spoke in terms of literacy being "something" akin to a tool that makes 'understanding' possible.

The social nature of literacy was referred to from a response that made a distinction between environments, alluding to the idea that 'literacy' can be done in different contexts, and that communication can be done in "a social/written environment". The social nature of literacy is highlighted further with the suggestion that speaking "is also an important aspect" and that literacy involves "talking to others". The word 'understanding' is used by one respondent to describe the thinking process and meaning-making that goes on within the acquisition of 'literacy' stating that literacy encompasses reading, writing and speaking but also "understanding the spoken and written word". One respondent referred to the act of using "the spoken word" as the basis for their

understanding of literacy. However, another response suggested that literacy as simply the use of language was very "narrow" and stated that this common stance was "not something I would adhere to".

Of the situated meanings offered by the participants, the most socio-culturally inclusive were those that saw literacy as a way "to understand and develop meanings", and went on to describe that literacy "can be used to portray emotions and share ideas, as well as record information and findings". This position aligns directly to those advocates of wider literacy theory, particularly within the canon of work on emotional literacy. Another response cited that literacy "also means having an understanding of ... basic concepts and ideas". This can be linked to the notion that literacy is the understanding of ideas and not the acquisition of abilities, which draws on the socio-cultural approach to literacy advocated by Gee (1997).

What is Digital Literacy?

Our discussion moves now to digital literacy as a concept, building on the previous reflections of the sample's understanding of literacy. It was concerning to hear that 55% of the sample had no previous experience of the term digital literacy, however this figure could be due to the age and experience or the 'trainee' status of the respondents. What is interesting to note is that despite not having any knowledge of the term, the same percentage of this group identified themselves as 'digital natives' (Prensky 2001), a group of young people who are inherently skilled with new communication technologies.

Throughout the responses there seems to be little crossover in the understanding of literacy and the situated meanings of the term digital literacy. A common conception of digital literacy is the notion that it relates to basic computer skills. This dominant view was expressed by just under half of the sample. Those who agreed that digital literacy referred to a level of basic computer skills, made reference to the acts of word processing, using email and using search engines to access information on the internet, as key determinates of digital literacy.

Despite previous inexperience with the term digital literacy, when the sample were asked if digital literacy skills were important, 77.8% agreed they were 'very important' and 100% went on to agree that digital literacy skills would become increasingly important as technology developed. When asked what would have the most impact on future teaching and learning,

77.8% of the respondents agreed that the ability for technology to do a number of tasks would impact teaching and learning the most. Examples such as the convergence of personal technology that allows a mobile phone to be used as an internet device or that a table computer can be used as a reading tool, were cited. Whereas 44% of the sample agreed that the relationship young people have with personal technology would impact the future of teaching and learning.

These results are highly in-tune with a vast area of current thinking within the wider literacies debate. Discussions about the impact of technology on learning in terms of the convergence of technology, social mobility, copyright and how this could be affected by technology, participation and the technological barrier or divide, identity and the role of technology in the formation of identity, the impact of commercialization and the ubiquitous nature of new technology (Marsh 2008; Buckingham 2008) are ongoing.

When asked if digital literacy should be embedded into all subjects, 77.8% of respondents agreed with the position strongly advocated by JISC in *Learning Literacies in a Digital Age* (2009), that a literacy for the 21st century would be best learnt if digital literacies are embedded into the curriculum and moved out of silos.

When the sample were asked where they thought digital literacy should be positioned and taught with regard to the current curriculum, it was unsurprising that 67% expressed the view that digital literacy teaching should be within the subject specialisms of English, Media Studies, ICT or within the Functional Skills curricula, commonly viewed as 'literacy' umbrella subjects. What was interesting was the extent of those that agreed that the teaching of digital literacy should be a compulsory element of the curriculum. 88.9% agreed that it should be compulsory, whereas a relatively small 11.1% 'weren't sure' if digital literacy should be compulsory within teaching in FE.

When asked to reflect on their confidence in teaching digital literacy skills within the classroom, 44.4% said they would feel 'confident', despite over half of the sample previously stating that they had never heard of the term. When asked what would make the sample feel more confident in embedding digital literacy within their teaching, 55% of the sample

agreed that in-service training would make them more confident, and 33% stated that a functional and clear definition of digital literacy would be helpful. 33% of the sample agreed that a national strategy to help support teachers in their use of digital literacy in the classroom would make them feel 'more confident'.

Interestingly, 100% of respondents did not know if their institution had a digital literacy policy. This response was not unexpected, as there is no overarching national digital literacy policy at work within FE institutions in the UK. However, the very nature of the respondents' work patterns and status within their teaching placements may mean that they do not have access to such policies, or that these policies are not highly prioritised or championed to all staff within their work places. What is worth noting here, as briefly mentioned above, is that digital literacy policies are the concern of institutions themselves and that no overarching policy is in place within the sector. The work of FE goes on underneath a patchwork quilt of policy that is tied together through a variety of government guidelines and diverse subject curricula. It is an extremely complex job to piece together how digital literacy is being promoted and applied in the FE context.

The focus of this inquiry shifted to explore if the sample would encourage the idea of an institutional digital literacy specialist to be present within FE institutions to support staff and students in their teaching and learning. 66.6% of the sample were positive and saw the merit of a digital literacy specialist. This was an expected result yet one I hesitantly advocate. By positioning digital literacy as a concern of a dedicated 'specialist' could mean that digital literacy is viewed as separate from the 'main' curriculum, rendering digital literacy as 'extra curricular', a position that JISC (2009) suggests would prove counter-productive.

Whilst this work is a small regional study which has been conducted in an FE provider in one UK region, it has raised some interesting questions that would benefit from further exploration. What will be interesting to consider would be how the skill of reading translates to what teachers understand as digital literacy, in terms of what it means to 'read' within and across digital media.

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Why do we keep emotion under control?

Several authors explain why it is not unusual for organisations to seem to be emotion-free. Sanchez-Burks & Huy (2009) refer to a widespread "habit among Westerners to filter out much of what unfolds in the social and emotional domains...attributed to the pervasive work ethos of the protestant relational ideology, which assumes that social and emotional matters interfere with business effectiveness". Ashforth & Humphrey (1995), referring to Weber, state "that bureaucracy progresses the more it is dehumanized, the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred and all purely personal irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation". Complicating this, the ascent of rationality as the dominant administrative paradigm has led to an "overrationalised conception of organisational life" (Morgan 1986) resulting in a pervasive neglect of emotionality in organisational life. So, we eschew emotion due to our Western work ethic and our bureaucratic organisational approach.

What are the benefits of evoking and exploring emotions within workplace change?

Vince & Broussine (1996) claim there are benefits to deliberately exploring emotion during organisational change, as outlined in the rationale above.

Avey et al (2008) concur reporting the enhancement of mindfulness as a result of tapping into one's emotions, which suggests that becoming more mindful of one's thoughts and emotional response patterns can identify misconceptions and faulty assumptions, and offer an open approach to problem solving and supply energy for adapting to new conditions.

Jordan (2005) also identifies the importance of emotional reflection for groups as a method for coping with change and finding solutions. Confusion and paradox can be used as an "energiser of reflection as a counterweight to the unreflective discourse" surrounding change management; and exploring emotion around change will surface both confusion and paradox (Luscher & Lewis 2008:235). "What would sometimes be referred to as resistance, will lead to alterations for the better in the direction of change, because the reality of others will sometimes expose the problems of implementation that must be addressed" (Fullan 2001:97). Rather than viewing resistance to change negatively, Thomas & Hardy (2001) highlight the benefit of embracing resistance, suggesting it is important to give voice to and

allow for resistance on the part of identities rendered invisible in organisational change. It is through chaos that we may find best practice, when relations mobilised by private and displayed emotions reflecting power relations create surprising, self-limiting, unexpected, uncomfortable and unwanted structures for action, but enabling action that will, given the appropriate circumstances, result in positive outcomes. Many scholars, including Jordan (2005) and Liu & Perrewe (2005), speak about the management of emotions as the main reason for exploring emotions in organisations. However, Callahan & McCollum (2002) remind us of Freire's (1970:77) insight that "emotion is an emergent force underpinning dialogue that cannot serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one man by another".

These are convincing examples of the merit of exploring emotions around change. However, many researchers recommend caution when working with emotions in organisational settings as it is risky and potentially damaging if not appropriately done. Liu & Perrewe (2005) warn that emotions are not static; individuals will differ in the time needed for sense-making, appraisal and in the factors they take into consideration in their individual appraisals. Rajah et al (2011) add another layer to the complexity of emotions with their claim that more than one emotion can be felt at any one time. Clearly emotion is complex and working with emotions requires great care and expertise.

What method?

Historically, quantitative methods have been used to explore emotions, but more recently researchers are using qualitative language-based approaches, which allow for rich, naturalistic investigations. Mossholder (2000) measured emotion through interviews, using word frequency and computer aided textual analysis of the responses using the *Dictionary of Affect in Language* (Whissell & Dewson 1986) which measures the emotional tone of words. This was an interesting perspective as the emotional content plus the strength of the emotion was measured. Sorensen et al (2011) used qualitative and quantitative measures plus actors' interpretations of other actors' relational signalling as a method of establishing measures of trust as well as other emotions. This methodology appeals, as interpretations will elicit dialogue which uncovers further emotions and data iteratively.

While interviews and questionnaires give a good account of participant feelings, they can't

capture the essence of emotions being felt, the implicit emotion or the emotion that is hidden under the surface. These simply give a close approximation of how a participant feels. Generalisation can therefore be seen as a limitation of these methodologies.

Vince & Broussine's (1996) visual participatory method may offer a solution. The method enables emotional contents of the mind to be revealed through images. It can illustrate those feelings that individuals are not aware of, that are difficult to articulate and can counteract emotional regulation efforts. The collaborative aspect yields benefits not possible with standard interview techniques as the iterative interpretative work can reveal aspects of collective emotional experience.

Participants are asked to interpret their own and then other people's illustrations, promoting dialogue. It can reveal links between an individual's real and imagined idea of the organisation and some of the key factors in the emotional and political relations that undermine change, such as poor communication. It offers opportunities to engage overtly with researcher bias and triangulates well with other qualitative methods such as semi-structured interview and observation data. Several researchers have used this method with successful results, among them Meyer (1991) and Kearney & Hyle (2004). However, Ashforth & Humphrey (1995) warn that this methodology is complicated, multi-layered and risky as it is not known beforehand what emotions will surface. It therefore poses an ethical question for the researcher that needs careful management.

Study Approach and Results

Even with an awareness of the complexity of emotions, the benefit of emotional awareness and working with emotions is clear. The assertion that the organisational culture will have a bearing on emotional states and displays has formed the theoretical platform for this study.

The Approach

This study occurred during the planning stage of the amalgamation of the ABES and three other education/training services. The sample in this study consisted of 16 members of the ABES, 2 male and 14 female. 7 of the group had middle management roles, 1 a senior management role and the other 8 were tutors. The age range was from late 30s to early 60s. Ten participants were concerned about their lack of drawing abilities, but agreed to participate. Permission was sought and received from senior management before proceeding. The feasibility of taking intervention

actions after the exercise was discussed. It was agreed that actions suggested by the group would be considered for implementation.

The study is based on the participatory visual method described by Vince & Broussine (1996) because involving participants in the generation of data is a dynamic means of generating rich emotional data. Access to this group of colleagues was for 45 minutes so this short timeframe limited methodology options. The main reason for using this method was informed by Warren & Parker's (2009) "third party effect". This explains how discussion is always easier when there is something to talk about and potentially uncomfortable personal talk is deflected since conversation is "flowing through the image" thus moving the spotlight off the participant. This will also contribute to that safe environment. The expected "third party effect" is central to this study.

It is important to ensure a very clear and well-bounded space and time for the visual data collection. Therefore, the study was introduced the day before the exercise so that participants had time to consider participating. They were provided with information on the method, instructions for their task and the objectives of the exercise. Because participants and researcher were not aware of the emotions that were going to be generated, it was not possible to fully explain what the experience itself would reveal beforehand. It was therefore very important to be clear that the focus was on the interpretation of the drawings rather than the drawings themselves, and that the drawings were not going to be used in therapeutic interventions but to generate data. Participants were asked to sign an information/consent form if they agreed to participate.

On the study day:

1. Participants were asked to illustrate how they felt about change, qualifying the objective with, "What you feel may be based on real, assumed or imagined thoughts, this doesn't matter, what matters is how you feel. How does change make you feel?" 10 minutes were assigned for the illustration. Participants were provided with a blank A3 sheet and coloured pencils and asked to reflect on their drawing and commit 4-6 words to the back of the picture confirming this reflection. The methodology differed from the original method at this stage; participant names and locations were not requested in an attempt to increase anonymity.

2. Participants were asked to share their drawing with three designated others who were asked to interpret the drawings, compare each to the originator's interpretation, discuss any discrepancies or new interpretations and identify any common themes across the four illustrations. 20 minutes were allocated for this.
3. Each group presented the illustrations and common themes to the larger group for another round of interpretation. 15 minutes were assigned, however, it continued into lunch and has been a source of discussion since. This session was recorded and transcribed.
4. The transcript was inductively analysed using thematic analysis. The frequency of words was assessed, although no claim to statistical significance is made with such a small sample.
5. The data was recorded in a PowerPoint presentation, which was presented to the participants for verification, and feedback from participants was incorporated.

This study differed from the original in the time allocated for the initial workshop which was one hour instead of two. Also, ideally, the drawings would provide the context for follow-up interviews; however, this was not feasible at the time.

The limitations were many; the design was curtailed, the sample was small and representative of a single department within the larger service, while the demographic mix was similar, the culture of this group would differ to other departments, so the sample isn't generalisable. The validity of the data was a source of some thought also, as emotion is viewed as socially constructed and interpretive, so will vary with each context. I am, however, confident that taking the participatory approach, the data does stand up and is a true reflection of the emotions of the participants.

The Results

The complexity of emotions was certainly demonstrated. Every participant exhibited more than one emotion and many noted both positive and negative emotions. The method did provide an insight into feelings both individual and organisational. Powerful images did result. We saw unconscious emotions that were barely noticeable in the image but communicated much about an individual's feelings and surrounding context, and common themes did emerge. These confirmed those reported in other research such as Kearney & Hyle (2004) and Vince (2006) and

are typical of organisation amalgamating as cited in Sinkovics (2011). Table 1 shows the common themes and the percentage of references each received:

Theme	Reference (%)
1 Opportunity/Challenge	78
2 Uncertainty/Confusion	78
3 Power Voice Vision/View/Shadow Direction	78
4 Fear/Anxiety Which path Change Loss (e.g. education to training) Personal ability/New expectations	52
5 Attachments Ethos Fundamental values	39

Table 1: Common Themes and Citations (%)

Due to the scale of the impending change, the predominant themes were negative, which is as expected, but it is interesting that positive themes also emerged; opportunity, combined with uncertainty and power, are the themes that emerged most, typical of amalgamating organisations in the planning phase. The vision isn't clear at this point, so feelings are anticipatory. There is uncertainty about what the changes will actually bring. There is optimism as it can be seen as an opportunity, but also a feeling of powerlessness, as participants feel they have no voice, influence or direction. Simultaneously, participants are anxious about loss. There was an absence of anger, although this would be consistent with planning stage emotions as anticipatory fear was evident rather than anger at things that had already been done.

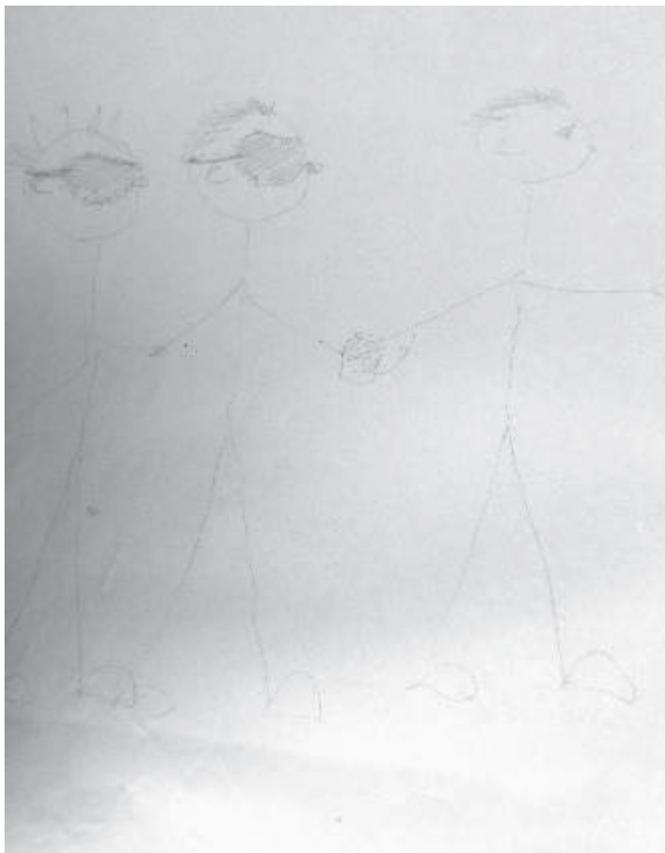
The common themes will now be looked at more closely:

Power

Reference to power relations was demonstrated in 78% of responses. Power was indicated in many ways, for instance through the size differential between the large future governing body and smaller participants, with blindfolds or hands tied indicating lack of control or vision, through voiceless people, zombies with "no voice, no control just following mindlessly".

Figure 1 illustrates the powerlessness theme well; two blindfolded people are being led and the illustrator hadn't noticed when she drew the image, but later spotted, that the leader had a mouth while the others didn't. She believes that this interpretation of voicelessness came from her subconscious. The group interpretation of this image was curious and two options were offered: that the ABES could either be the leader bringing others along, or could be led. Was this a choice or indicative of an underlying tension that it is not leading already? This served as a call to arms, a valuable input for any follow-up work on creation of new knowledge. Interestingly, some illustrations did not represent powerlessness rather empowerment, "Yes I can, I am capable, have done it before!" This indicates that past experience can empower and inform future change.

Figure 1: Lead or be led! Our choice!



Fear and Loss of Attachments

Participants were fearful of many things: change, what it would bring, and personal abilities, "Will I cope, can I?" Most strongly exhibited was a fear of loss of something fundamental, of values, culture and identity. Carr (2001:433) suggests that identity is "laced with emotionality, change can dislodge that identity and produce a reaction akin to grieving".

Clouds, shadows and closed doors indicate

foreboding about some impending trouble that cannot be visualised, stopped or controlled, and bring in the powerlessness theme. The reference to loss was also visible at organisational levels: loss of public service values, "change is stopping us doing what we do, what we're known for, our work will be taken away or disregarded" (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Fear of loss, we make, you take



Figure 2 also represents attachment to the past; the figure is 'torn' looking back and to the future simultaneously. Similar to the subconscious element in Figure 1, this illustrator felt compelled to include the birds. A week after the exercise they were still on her mind. "Why the birds?" We eventually interpreted that the birds offer perspective; they have a bird's eye view, before anyone on the ground. This is apt as the illustrator is a senior manager, who is "striving to rise above and get perspective so she can facilitate those below to navigate through change".

Theoretically, fear is seen as anticipation of a possible future event and/or lack of control. Once more information is made available, fear will most likely be replaced by a different emotion such as anger or relief.

Attachments provide individuals with a basic frame for meaning and relatedness. Fear and concern over loss of those aspects of their work-lives that provide meaning, sense, stability and worth and of attachments, are typical themes to expect as individuals are fearful of the prospect of a new order and loss of ontological security (Vince & Broussine 1996).

Opportunity/Challenge

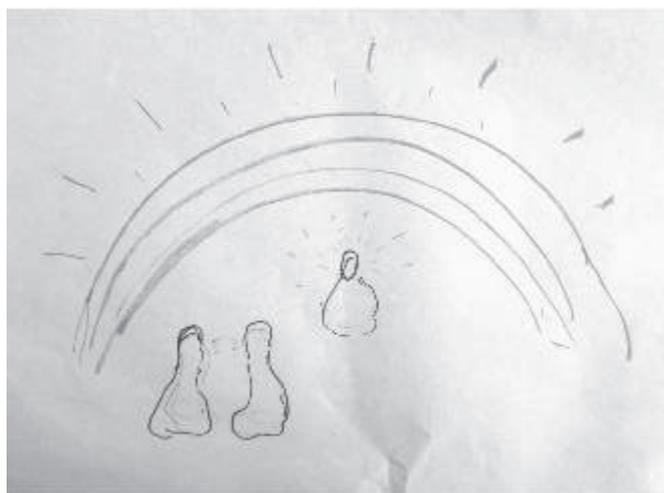
This was well represented, through sunny skies, growth, fruit, creativity, possibility, buzz, and many direct but cautionary references to

“opportunity”. There was a pervading sense of hope in Figures 3 and 4: riding waves, even though change was relentless, and constant, we just need to “embrace change, grab on and ride the waves” or “turn to the light and keep your equilibrium”. Use of colour too indicated opportunity; the brightness of hope and knowledge is represented in Figure 4, others used greens and earth colours to represent growth.

Figure 3: Wave of change



Figure 4: Turn to the light

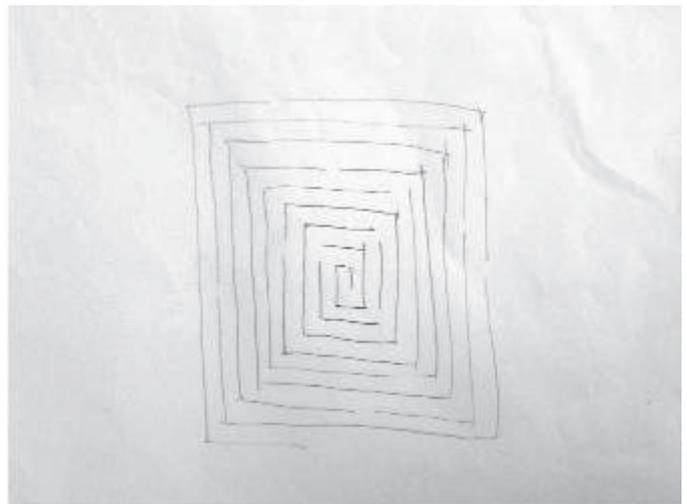


Uncertainty

Transformational change is full of uncertainty as the future state is only being discovered as the organisation moves into the unknown. Understandably so, uncertainty was illustrated in 78% of the images. Uncertainty was illustrated through use of signposts and pathways, each leading to different paths which end up in the same destination. This response to transformational change is indicative of Bridges (1991) transitions model of change, which suggests that people can take individual and

different paths through change and still end up in the same place. The maze image in Figure 5 aptly represents uncertainty. There is no cheese visible at the centre of the maze to draw players into the maze, indicating lack of vision. There is no map, rather, trial and error are the order, where players must go forward until a wall is hit only to go back and try again using another path. This represents the challenges of transformative change well, where change emerges, little by little as one gets closer to 'the cheese'.

Figure 5: The maze of change



General Feedback

Participants reported afterwards that the exercise really had an impact, that they uncovered feelings including some they had not been aware of. The results surprised all participants as none had expected the outcomes illustrated or the interpretations and different perspectives.

Eight participants felt that it clarified things, claiming they felt better as a result, the “fuzziness had lifted”. Even though our discussions were cut short, they have continued informally. This exercise identified a need for information and facilitated the development of a climate for dialogue. “I feel it's acceptable to talk about how I feel now, I had been talking about how it would affect learners but had thought it unprofessional or a bit selfish to talk about how I felt.”

The images and their interpretations will be used to facilitate discussion about what we wish to protect through transformation. It will enable identification and description of those important aspects of our service we want to retain. Later, and at regular intervals, the exercise will be

repeated as individual change actions are implemented. This will help identify issues which need attention. Using the process to surface and then question as described by Vince (2006) may result in more of the promised benefits described in the literature.

Briner (1999) claims that organisational constructs of motivation, leadership and change cannot be understood if emotions are excluded. This study has highlighted the impact emotion can have in organisational change. It has also raised awareness of the complexity of emotion and that much care must be taken when working with emotions.

Returning to the promised impact of emotion on change described in the literature review, a brief look at whether these outcomes are achievable for the ABES, facing transformational change follows:

- **A stimulus for reflection?**

This short study has been a source of clarity for participants. Jumbled, messy thoughts were clarified, assumptions were identified, maladaptive thoughts and rumour cleared up as previously reported by Vince & Broussine (1996). Participants now know what they really feel, what is important, what questions to ask and actions to take, akin to the mindfulness that Avey (2008) promised.

- **New knowledge that will enable action or 'working through'?**

Can we replace the rational approach with the complex rational, emotional, political and social approach to gain new knowledge as suggested by Vince? Using an emotional lens would be a paradigm shift for many organisations, but a change in ways of working does seem possible through an engagement within and between groups using this method as a springboard. For transformational change, learning and change plan corrections and adaptations are essential and depend on emotional data. Organisations that optimise the ability to solicit and understand feedback, learn from it and turn that learning into effective course corrections have a greater chance of success (Anderson & Anderson 2001). Dialogue has started; it is possible to "use chaos" as one participant noted, to lead through the change. This is a new departure; it reduces fear somewhat, by trying to take some control.

- **Embrace resistance?**

Although anxiety and fear were illustrated, there was not much evidence of actual resistance in this study. This is because there is no real information available at this time to cause resistance. There was however, a warning that participants do feel powerless and voiceless which can often lead to resistance if change is not managed appropriately. The platform and knowledge are there now to build on, and resistance can be looked at as something to engage with positively.

Conclusion

This study has indeed challenged my view of emotions during change and the views of those who participated in the study were similarly challenged. Emotion can't and shouldn't be omitted from change. It would be prudent for organisations to take greater consideration of the important role that emotion may play during organisational transformations. Facing transformational change, organisations need to be prepared, need to have all available armour in place, and emotion is a valuable part of this armour. As Stephen Fineman (2001:1) aptly says, emotion "is not sand in the organisational machine, it is a very part of the machinery". Emotion can be either sand *or oil* in the organisational machinery; it just depends on how you use it.

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Reviews

Grammar for Sentence Combining: Underpinning Knowledge for Adult Literacy Practitioners

Maxine Burton
Leicester: NIACE (2012)
64 pages
£9.95
ISBN 978-1-86201-514-2

Reviewed by Sue Grief

If I were still a Skills for Life manager, I would make sure that there were several copies of this small book available on the resources shelves. In a few, brief and clearly presented chapters the book offers an accessible introduction to grammar and provides a framework for thinking and talking about sentences that is aimed specifically at adult literacy teachers. Many teachers will find it invaluable, especially those who missed out on grammar teaching or who feel the need to brush up their knowledge from their schooldays. It will also be of interest to teacher educators.

As the first part of its title suggests, the book has a rather more specific aim. It has its origins in the training provided for the teachers who took part in the NRDC project on Progress for Adult Literacy Learners (Burton et al 2010) and is intended to provide the underpinning knowledge required to teach sentence combining. This is an approach to the teaching of writing that involves bringing together simple sentences to create compound or complex sentences and provides opportunity to teach aspects of grammar in an informal way. The first chapter draws on evidence from research undertaken in the USA, and a recent NRDC project which indicates that sentence combining can lead to an increase in the quality of learners' writing. This is in contrast with the formal teaching of grammar for which there is no equivalent evidence.

The author argues, in her introduction that, whatever the merits of formal grammar teaching for learners, for literacy teachers, grammar provides, "essential underpinning knowledge for confident and effective classroom practice – and for avoiding some of the pitfalls for the unprepared". Chapter 2 addresses the question, "What is grammar?" Chapter 3 asks, "What is a sentence?" and Chapter 4, "What is a conjunction?" A further aspect of written language, language variation, is the focus of Chapter 7. This covers the distinctions between

accent and dialect, Standard English and Received Pronunciation and discusses the status and use of regional dialects. Together these four chapters cover a surprising amount of ground in a concise but readable form. The information is presented with very few references to its application to teaching sentence combining and for this reason could be used in a more general context. An understanding of the ways in which sentences can be structured or the appreciation that Standard English is only one dialect among many, albeit the one that has the greatest prestige, is valuable underpinning knowledge for all aspects of literacy teaching.

The presentation of the book helps to make the information accessible. Linguistic concepts and terminology are introduced clearly and simply with good use made of tables to summarise the main features and provide examples. The font is large and clear and the text is broken up into manageable sections. Colour is used for side headings as well as for tables and examples. 'Tasks', clearly identified by a broad band of colour, provide opportunity for the conscientious reader to engage actively with the subject matter and strengthen their understanding of new concepts.

In the section, "How to use this book", the author states that, "in the apparent absence of any other easily available information on using sentence combining with adults, the book will also aim to equip teachers with guidelines for using this strategy in the classroom" (p.2). Chapter 5 offers some useful pointers, including ideas for generating sentences to combine, and suggests a number of sources for relevant teaching materials, while Chapter 6 discusses how sentence combining can support the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum. What the book does not provide is a detailed picture of how a session on sentence combining can work in practice. It could have benefited from the addition of session plans, examples of the resources used or the actual sentences that learners produced to help to bring the strategy to life.

If we are to believe that sentence combining can have a significant effect on the quality of learners' writing, the first need is for a book that sets out this strategy for teachers and demonstrates its uses. Such a book could, not only make a strong case for an underpinning knowledge of grammar, on the part of literacy teachers, but could also include the relevant chapters outlined above. However, I would argue

that the knowledge of grammar and language variation the book under review teaches is relevant to *all* aspects of literacy teaching, not just sentence combining, and it would be a shame if a title, which ties this specifically to sentence combining, deters readers who would find it useful. Perhaps there is the potential for two books! In the meantime this slim volume has a great deal to recommend it and is a valuable addition to the resources for teachers of writing for adults.

Burton, M. (2012) *Grammar for Sentence Combining: Underpinning Knowledge for Adult Literacy Practitioners*. Leicester: NIACE.

Burton, M. et al (2010) *Progress for Adult Literacy Learners*. London: NRDC

Grief, S, and Chatterton, J (2007) *Developing Adult Teaching and Learning: Practitioner Guides*. Leicester: NIACE.

Sue Grief worked in adult literacy for 25 years as a teacher, trainer, co-ordinator and development adviser. She also helped to manage a series of research projects for the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) and is co-author of the NRDC Practitioner Guide on writing. Sue is now retired.

Literacy and the Practice of Writing in the 19th Century:

A Strange Blossoming of Spirit

Ursula Howard

Leicester: NIACE (2012)

349 pages

£24.95

ISBN 978-1-86207-564-7

Reviewed by Doreen Chappell

Ursula Howard focuses on writing, by her own admission the aspect of literacy which is less likely to be addressed, in past and present literacy research, and indeed, in opportunities for adult education. She cites how, until very recently, the means for attainment by adults in the 20th and 21st centuries was the achievement of a qualification measured by a multiple choice reading test, with no need for the conscious act of writing. She also discusses why we might assume that our 19th century ancestors were less literate in writing than we are today; in fact almost the opposite is true; or perhaps it is rather that there has been little appreciable change, notwithstanding the raising of the ceiling to measure literacy skills. This has particular resonance for Skills for Life practitioners. Despite the gains at higher levels elicited by recent surveys, literacy acquisition

still presents us with the need for innovative solutions.

Howard tackles her subject by setting the scene in the developments of a thirst for communicating in writing by describing a history of education for adults (and children). She comments on how often 'self-help' groups formed, who did not have access to learning in an 'official' way, because of time or monetary constraints. Again, as a practitioner in the field for many years, it struck me that in some ways there are connections here with today, or rather with the groups that met in the 1970s, when Adult Literacy, as it was then named, existed heavily supported by volunteers, in the home, in pubs, in libraries; "nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9) comes to mind. Was this in some ways more effective in really enabling learners to explore and enjoy writing, without the drive for accreditation?

She explores culture and class, with reference to well or lesser known writers, particularly those whose literacy has been acquired with a working class background, which perhaps we, as modern, privileged educators, would not have imagined took place. Notable is the poet John Clare, who read his own compositions to his parents pretending that they were the instruments for copy book texts, as they would not have seen a poetry writing son as having any realistic prospects for the future.

Howard provides case studies of both men and women writers, illustrating from their backgrounds and lives evidence of the breadth and depth of writing practices in the 19th century. She explores creative and more formal texts, as well as the value and vital nature of letter writing for communication; something which today would be replaced largely by emails and text messages, and thus be seen as much less important.

The book provides an insight into perhaps a surprising wealth of writing practices in existence in an era when long work hours and poverty might be expected to override the desire for this method of communication. To a Skills for Life practitioner today, the ways in which people acquired their skills are an inspiration and reinforce innovative ideas, albeit constrained by the confines of today's funding regimes. Certainly, there are discussion points here to share with present day learners, if only to show them that their desire to learn, often under difficult circumstances, can be reflected even back in history.

Doreen Chappell is currently Curriculum Manager for Skills for Life for Leicester Adult Skills and Learning Service. She has been a teacher for nearly 38 years, over 30 of those in the Skills for Life field, in all its embodiments. Dyslexia is her specialism and passion. Contact details until July 2013 doreen.chappell@leicester.gov.uk and thereafter doreen.chappell@btinternet.com

Adult Literacy and Development: Stories from the Field

Alan Rogers and Brian Street
Leicester: NIACE, 2012
ISBN 978-1-86201-574-6 (print);
575-3 (PDF); 576-0 (ePub); 578-4 (Kindle)
235 pages
£24.95

Reviewed by Yvonne Spare

This book is a collaboration by two very experienced practitioners in the field of Adult Literacy. In it they describe examples of their extensive work in different countries in the developing world and suggest lessons to be learned for our own practice. Alan Rogers has specialised in adult learning methodologies whereas Brian Street's main interest has been in ethnographic field research. It is therefore as much for policy makers and researchers as for practitioners, examining the theories, policies and practices of literacy provision in the wider context of International Development.

The book is divided into three parts: the first, "Exploring Literacy in the Field" looks at some ethnographic studies and proposes a framework for analysis; the second, "Adult Literacy Learning Programmes" looks in more detail at the content of a range of programmes, and the third, "Some Implications for Policy and Practice" attempts to reconsider policy and practice as it might relate both to further programmes in the Developing world and also in the West.

Part One considers the view of literacy as social practice and how our thinking about literacy, learning and motivation has changed over time. The authors analyse the differences between formal and informal learning, recognising that we may use different languages or literacies (literacy practices) for different purposes. They understand that adults are sometimes more motivated by other types of learning than literacy learning, such as religious practice or work skills and ask, "Who has the power to determine that one form of writing is literacy but other forms are not literacy?" (p72).

Part Two investigates the long-term failure of many, indeed, the authors claim, most large-scale adult literacy programmes in the developing world and claim that many of the attributed benefits of learning literacy could actually be the benefits of participating in any learning group. These programmes are rarely adequately funded; they are often text-book based and make the assumption that the learners are all starting at the same level with no prior knowledge. The main failings, they say, are learner motivation, teaching methodology and the gap between classroom and everyday literacies. They offer as evidence the greater success demonstrated in the functional element of combined literacy and functional skills programmes.

In contrast, some of the success stories they describe include small-scale, non-text-book programmes, which may be linked to vocational training or health instruction, recognising that many learners will come with a specific task in mind, such as filling in a new form or reading a particular document. Sometimes these may be in workshop format, using learner-generated materials or items taken from the 'literacy environment' of a particular community. They cite the example of a drop-in literacy shop in a market in Nigeria (effectively a stall with a sign above) which attracted 3900 people in nine months, who could either be helped with some pressing literacy task or passed on to the nearest literacy class, succeeding in reaching a large number of people at very little cost (p143).

The authors conclude this section by suggesting four main reasons for failure, which apply equally to our own work closer to home:

- the assumption that provision leads to demand,
- that texts need to be easy reading,
- that new literacy users need reading but not writing,
- that literacy is an activity to do alone, independently, not collaboratively.

Part Three concludes with the implications of their findings for policy and practice. Firstly, that ethnographic research into existing literacy practices should always be carried out before developing a learning programme. Secondly, that there must be recognition that everyday literacy practices are usually different from forms of literacy being taught in many Adult Literacy Learning Programmes, and thirdly, that teaching adults is different from teaching children. Policies should start from the positive, explore existing

practices, and include literacy and numeracy as part of a whole set of skills which will help to bring about changes in people's lives.

This is a densely packed book, full of examples and references to many other studies. It benefits from repeated readings. (I had to read it twice to extract examples that I could remember.) The "stories from the field" are numerous but they are embedded in detailed analysis and references to other literature. Some examples, twelve in all, are highlighted in textboxes - I would have welcomed more of these. However, it is - as would be expected - a full account of over 40 years of experience. I enjoyed the photographs illustrating the descriptions of learners and classes - I read about the classes that took place at the side of the road because there was nowhere suitable, but it became much more meaningful when I saw the photograph on the following page of learners sitting in a row on the verge with traffic passing immediately behind "with all the interruptions, noise and even jeering that result" (p123). On the face of it this looks like an example of a culture (in this case Uganda) that did not value adult learning and teaching, yet many of us probably have memories of teaching adult learners in

unsuitable spaces when no classroom was available. So despite the examples being distant from the experience of most of us, there is much food for thought. Adult literacy learners come to classes in their own time, each with his or her own aims and motivation, which may or may not be the same as their neighbour's. As Street and Rogers conclude, the key to successfully achieving those aims is to identify and build on existing literacy practices, drawing together the everyday, informal literacies with the more formal classroom literacy.

Yvonne Spare has taught adult literacy across the whole range of settings for many years, including teacher training, before moving on to work as a research fieldworker for the University of Sheffield, NRDC and the Institute of Education. Since then she has worked as an independent researcher and consultant for various educational organisations, including the National Literacy Trust and the Reading Agency. She continues to work as an independent consultant and is currently developing a proofreading website to help small businesses and individuals. Contact: yvonne.spare@gmail.com

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. We welcome articles, reviews, reports, commentaries or cartoons 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 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.

Journal Structure

We want to encourage new writers as well as those with experience and to cover a range of topics, to do this the journal is divided into three main sections and a review section. Each section is slightly different in length and focus. We welcome illustrations and graphics for any of the sections. The journal has a different theme for each edition but welcomes general contributions particularly for Section 1 and Section 2 and for reviews.

Section 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.

Section 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.

Section 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 6,000

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.

Review Section

Reviews and reports of books, articles, and materials including CD 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 2-3 line biography and your contact details. You can write the review based upon your experience of using the book, article or materials in your role as a practitioner, teacher trainer, and researcher or as a student.

Submitting your work

1. Check the deadline dates and themes which are available in the journal and on the website.
2. All contributions should have the name of the author/s, a title and contact details which include postal address, email address and phone number. We would also like a short 2-3-line biography to accompany your piece. Sections, subsections, graphs or diagrams should be clearly indicated or labelled.
3. Send a copy to one of the journal co-ordinators

Naomi Horrocks naomi.horrocks@gmail.com
Sarah Freeman azdak@btopenworld.com
4. Your contribution should be word processed, in Arial size 12 font, double spaced on A4 paper with numbered pages.

What happens next

1. Editors and members of the Editorial Group review contributions for Section 1 and Section 2. Contributions for Section 3 are peer reviewed by a mixture of experienced academic, research and practice referees.
2. Feedback is provided by the editor/s within eight weeks of submission. This will include constructive comment and any suggestions for developing the piece if necessary.
3. You will be informed whether your piece has been accepted, subject to alterations, and if so the editor/s will work on a final editing process. Any final copy will be sent to authors prior to publishing.
4. Where work is not accepted the editor/s may suggest more relevant or alternative places for publication.

Please contact us if you want to discuss any ideas you have for contributing to the journal.

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