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What is it like for you?

**A phenomenological study:
teaching adult literacy in a further education
college under the auspices of the
Adult Literacy Core Curriculum**

Doctoral Thesis

By Sophia Monerville

**Doctorate in Education (EdD)
University of Greenwich**



January 2008

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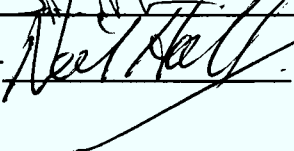
I particularly thank Dr. Neil Hall who has tirelessly encouraged, inspired and guided me throughout my whole journey as a student within the Doctorate in Education (EdD) programme and in the construction of this doctoral thesis.

Declaration

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of *Doctorate in Education (EdD)* being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised another's work.

Signed:

Student  Date 25/9/09

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Contents:	Page Number
List of Tables	I
Abstract	II
Chapter One: The background	
<i>Personal background</i>	1
<i>Professional context</i>	2
<i>The study</i>	3
Definition of terms	7
Chapter Two: Themes in adult literacy	
<i>Introduction</i>	9
Part 1: Adult literacy	
<i>What is adult literacy?</i>	10
<i>Culture</i>	16
<i>Ownership</i>	19
<i>Power</i>	22
Part 2: Cultural invasion	
<i>The absence of dialogue</i>	24
<i>Doubtful methodology</i>	25
Part 3: Changes and consequence	
<i>Inevitabilities</i>	28
<i>Relationships</i>	33
<i>Plaudits and prophecy</i>	40
<i>Debate and restate</i>	42
Summary: Literacy in our contemporary context	50
The research question	58
Chapter Three: Phenomenology methodology & philosophy	
<i>Introduction</i>	60
<i>Justification for the research question</i>	61
Phenomenology: methodology and philosophical framework	
What is phenomenology?	62
<i>Phenomenology as a methodology</i>	64
<i>Phenomenology as a philosophical framework</i>	66
<i>Intentionality</i>	67
<i>Epoche</i>	68
<i>Weakness: the impact of epoche</i>	70
<i>Phenomenological process and integration</i>	76
The phenomenological process	
<i>Context</i>	78
<i>Sample</i>	78
<i>Ethical considerations</i>	78
<i>Interview question</i>	79

<i>Interview process</i>	79
<i>Data collection, organisation and analysis</i>	80
<i>Justification for data organisation and analysis</i>	82
Chapter Four: Presentation of data	
<i>Introduction</i>	85
Co-researcher 1: Enid	
<i>Pen-portrait of the co-researcher</i>	86
The Narrative of Table X	
<i>Introduction</i>	100
<i>Table X</i>	106
Chapter Five: Discussion: The co-researcher's data	
<i>Introduction</i>	107
Comparing and distinguishing the findings with literature	
<i>Part 1: Adult literacy</i>	109
<i>Part 2: Cultural invasion</i>	118
<i>Part 3: Change and consequence</i>	122
Chapter Six: Discussion: Implications	
<i>Introduction</i>	131
<i>Implications for professional practice</i>	131
<i>Implications for government policy and practices</i>	135
<i>Implications for policy and practices in FE colleges</i>	138
<i>Implications for future studies</i>	140
<i>Summary of recommendations</i>	144
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	
<i>Introduction</i>	146
<i>Contribution to knowledge</i>	147
<i>A personal journey</i>	148
Bibliography	150
Appendix A: The modified Stevick- Colaizzi- Keen method for Phenomenological analysis	164
Appendix B: Data for co-researcher 2 - Janice	166
Appendix C: Data for co-researcher 3 - Sean	173
Appendix D: Data for co-researcher 4 - Jasmine	187
Appendix E: Data for co-researcher 5 - Zandi	199

List of Tables

Table	Page Number
Table 1: Verbatim recording of the conversation given by co-researcher Enid	87
Table 2: A record of significant statements by co-researcher Enid	90
Table 3: Non-repetitive and non overlapping statement - the invariant horizons or meaning units of Enid's experience	91
Table 4: Related and clustered horizons within themes generated from Enid's description of her experience	92
Table 5: The texture of Enid's experience: synthesis of the horizons	95
Table 6: The structure (meaning and essence) of Enid's experience	97
Table 7: Textural-structural description of the essences and meaning of Enid's experience	99
Table X: A composite presentation of the textural-structural synthesis of meanings and essences forming a universal description of teaching adult literacy in a further education college under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC)	106

Abstract

This study is about the experience of teaching adult literacy in a further education college under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) between the years 2002 to 2005. A universal description was derived from the perspectives of five college lecturers, called co-researchers, who volunteered a vivid description of their individual experience of teaching adult literacy in this context. These descriptions were reduced, in terms of volume, and the resulting data created a single universal description of the teaching experience. The modified phenomenological reduction and analysis process used was based on an approach created by Moustakas (1994) to answer the fundamental research question: '*What was it like for you?*' In answering this question, this study presents the crux of what constitutes the qualities or nature of the professional experience, and brings to the fore, the meaning contained within it. This study identified that the qualities within teaching in further education are very much under researched and that rarer still is research from a phenomenological perspective about teaching under the auspices of the ALCC. This study sought to fill this gap where it found that the introduction of the ALCC brought with it a complexity in its defining of adult literacy as a set of functional skills within a socio-economic context, and that its use galvanized the humanism of co-researchers and their sense of moral obligation. It further found that the ALCC became what unified the co-researchers professionally and instigated a teaching culture in which some consideration was given to the social implications of what they taught. Teaching under the auspices of the ALCC thus became the platform of possibility from which institutions and central government can nurture the culture's need for support, and from which teachers themselves can question their role.

Chapter One

The background

Personal background

It was the presence of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) and my active professional involvement with it that gave me the impetus to embark on a doctoral programme; hence my fascinating journey in the production of this study. Within the introduction I state what my intent is for this study with regards to its readers by highlighting what it is for and what it is about.

Of the roles I have occupied professionally in the further education sector, the role that had the most profound impact upon me was that of Communications/ Literacy Coordinator. I was appointed to this role in November 2002 and it was really only then that I took a considered interest in the national curriculum for adult literacy. In an educational context where policy change is inevitable and professional adaptation is a non-negotiated expectation and necessity, I began to experience an excitement, a buzz that I had never experienced as a lecturer before. This was due in part to the challenge of using a curriculum for teaching adult literacy, a concept and behaviour, which I had never had to consider in the past concerning teaching adult literacy. I had the responsibility of supporting teachers of adult literacy within the department to understand the content of the ALCC. I would then support them to apply this content through teaching delivery

and assessment practices to students aged from fourteen years upwards predominantly on discrete internal courses. This overlapped into the mainstream college provision framework where teachers who were affiliated to learner support taught on programmes that merged with other college departments to support students to address amongst other issues, their need to demonstrate academic literacies demanded by their course of learning. Consequently, instead of my usual osmotic response to absorb, do and not question, I began to consciously reflect and quietly consider what teaching under the auspices of the ALCC was and how a much wider context existed in terms of the social, economic and political connotations that surround not just its emergence but its actual presence as it was in the college institution between September 2002 and July 2005.

Professional context

This study is a discourse on the perceptions of change within the lived experiences of five teachers in the further education (FE) sector who commonly incorporate adult literacy curricula into the planning and delivery of adult literacy as a designated, stand-alone subject and embed literacy in the teaching of other subjects. In this study they are referred to as my co-researchers.

The use of the ALCC in England between 2002 and 2005 was non-mandatory, yet, its use was compelled through internal and prescriptive Quality Assurance practices, external inspection processes and funding agreements. This and the use of the ALCC appeared to prompt teaching staff to openly voice private experiences of what teaching adult literacy was like within a further education college. Teachers began to share their experiences in terms of their anxieties and the pressures felt because of what was seen as a document that was asking for a behavioural change

whereby a national curriculum had to be used and become an established teaching behaviour to produce learning outcomes for adult learners to be perceived as being functionally literate. Through implementation strategies, the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum was incorporated within planning and delivery at subject level and implicitly embedded at course level with the onus on teachers within this context to evidence a commitment to this phenomenon within their teaching, learning and assessment practices.

The study

It was against this background that the literature review that immediately follows this introduction, critically explores existing theory on what the phenomenon of literacy is, and specifically functional literacy. It asks and examines what is adult literacy in relation to the definition presented from a functionalist perspective and the role, purpose and potential consequence of literacy practices in our current socio-political context. The review critiques the basis of the construction of nationally applied adult literacy curricula in England in relation to the ideology and the intent laid out by UK central government and others who share responsibility for their construction in the contemporary socio-economic climate (DfES, 2002; Nicoll & Edwards, 2004; Franklin, 2004). This critique will be set against a brief examination of the professionalism and current teaching practices of the adult literacy teacher in the further education sector in the context of debate about the emergence of increasing regulation to both improve standards and to support standardisation of practice, and how this is perceived in relation to a new professionalism in teaching (Lucas, 2004; Bathmaker and Avis, 2005). The initial part of the literature review asks, '*what is adult literacy?*' as had my previous work in relation to the ideological, intent implied by UK central government, that is, the Labour Party

and others who share responsibility for their conception (Monerville, 2003).

The literature reviewed intends to extend the discussion and challenges the appropriateness of the curricula in the perpetuation of the myth that functional literacy affects positive, national socio-economic outcomes.

When reading the literature that accompanied the emergence of the ALCC, I was struck by the Labour government's focus on being *functional* and the notion of *Functional skills* in the context of the *Skills for Life* agenda under its leadership by the then Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair (Moser, 1999). Consequently, choosing the theoretical perspective in the presentation of this study was one of the least challenging decisions I had to make in respect to the writing of it. Therefore, the theoretical perspective that I present in this inquiry is situated firmly in sociology and it is that of structural functionalism. The basic premise of structural functionalism is that social coherence and human phenomena are underpinned by the transmission of efficient structures of formal rules, signs and arrangements and implies that meaning, language and culture can be understood on the basis of what the identifiable framework structures are and need to be in place for social systems within a given society to function effectively (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, pp 178-188). I argue that educational systems such as adult literacy curricula have been constructed to perpetuate ideology as if by consensus and is presumably not an accident that it makes assumptions about the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of teachers who transmit the '*overt and official*' knowledge.

When the emergence, introduction and implementation of adult literacy curricula is coloured by

humanist discourse such as that presented by Giroux (1987), it becomes clear that the social and cultural complexities associated with the impact of change in lived human experiences and what it means to be *perceived as* adult in educational contexts, is multifaceted, and has relevance in other ideological perspectives, including postmodernism and critical theory, and other theoretical context such as change management and curriculum reform (Monerville, 2003).

This inquiry is set firmly in a research paradigm that is qualitative where my chosen methodology is that of phenomenology, which I also use as a philosophical perspective. The inquiry produces, through processes that are based upon phenomenological reduction analysis and philosophical debate, a reflection of the actual or lived experience of teaching adult literacy. Within the reflection, meanings emerge as essential elements of the teachers' experiences in the further education (FE) context. Teacher meanings are generated and deliberately used to extrapolate further meaning in a wider socio-cultural and socio-political arena. The research process should identify a range of implied and explicit ethical and ideological issues for teachers of adult literacy whose consent of perceived and symbolic social power relationships is implied in their use of a national curriculum that apparently facilitates access to genres of power perpetuated through what may be perceived as prescribed delivery of adult literacy. This was in the context of the use of its readily available teaching resources, its suggested teaching strategies and the accredited national tests for learners to reflect the functional literacy skill levels acquired.

My intention in this inquiry was to distinguish what is unique about the individual professional experiences of my colleagues as adult literacy teachers and apply phenomenology to the descriptions of what was experienced to identify the crux of the meanings within how it was

experienced from a philosophical standpoint. From their individual experiences, I produce an integrated, collective universal description of what it is like to teach adult literacy under the auspices of the Core Curriculum. The methodological and philosophical processes of phenomenology allows me, as the researcher, to foster introspection and obtain subjectively weighted truths or value endowed meanings as they relate to the socio-political ideals evident in literature that has and does accompany the ALCC as applied in England from September 2002 to July 2005.

After the reading of this study, I hope that the impact on professional practice is that teachers of adult literacy in England will approach teaching armed with the knowledge of what roles we all play or have in social reconstruction initiated by the vacuum of the discursive strategies of the dominant literacies apparently perpetuated by the ALCC. It is anticipated that adult literacy teachers, particularly in further education institutions in England, will be provoked sufficiently to reflect upon whether they feel that their own moral ideal is being compromised and whether they have helped or hindered their adult students as socially functioning individuals. This study asks five teachers: What is it like to be a teacher of adult literacy in a FE college teaching under the auspices of a national curriculum for adult literacy? To date, it appears that this question has not been formally asked of experienced and practicing adult literacy teachers in the FE context in England or acknowledged as an authentic question or concern in either qualitative or quantitative research studies. I attempt therefore, to begin to broach that gap with this study that I feel will evoke teachers to reflect on their own professional stories and refocus their gaze on their roles within and beyond their classrooms.

Definition of terms

Teacher

A person who imparts knowledge and understanding and whom gives information and instruction in or about a subject or skill in the further education sector.

Adult Literacy

The reading, writing, speaking, listening techniques, skills or behaviours acquired through either formal, informal and localised interactions with institutions, systems and people. For more detail, refer to the literature review.

Further Education (FE) College

An educational institution within the post-compulsory education and training sector (PCET), serving groups that traditionally range in age from 16 years onwards (increasingly there is provision for groups in the age range 14-16 years in FE); offering both accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities within academic, vocational or leisure based courses or learning programmes.

Adult Literacy Core Curriculum

An institutionalised and state funded national curriculum for adult literacy in England which sets out in logical order the functional literacy skills that every adult is deemed to need in England. This is set within the launch of the British government's launch of the Skills for Life Strategy in September 2001. The Skills for Life Strategy set out the government's strategy for adult literacy, language and numeracy in national curricula. The national curricula and the national standards

for adult literacy marked renewed provision of literacy teaching and learning for adults in England.

Adult Literacy Learner

A person who attends and participates in adult literacy classes that function under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum as part of a formalised adult literacy programme offered in a further education college in England. The adult literacy learner here is deemed as having skills (Standard English) below that equivalent of level two (equal to the GCSE or General Certificate of Secondary Education, A to C grade) of the National Standards for adult literacy in England. The term *adult literacy learner* is used interchangeably with the terms *adult literacy student* or *student of adult literacy*.

Lived experience

This is the experience of an actual phenomenon described by the research participant(s).

Teacher meaning

Essential elements of what was experienced by co-researchers and how it was experienced in relation to the phenomenon derived at through a phenomenological method and philosophical analysis.

Essences

The qualities or nature that makes a lived experience of a phenomenon what it is.

Chapter Two

Themes in adult literacy

Introduction

It is clear that the word literacy means different things to different people and organisations. How it is defined appears to be based upon the values, assumptions, cultural norms and the rhetoric of the society or institution presenting the definition. To illustrate this with an example: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which is an international organisation founded in 1961 to coordinate the economic policies of industrialised countries (OECD, 1995, p 3) present a vast, complex and ideologically loaded definition of literacy that describes a mode of functional behaviours or skills classified and divided into criteria based domains that are: prose literacy, document literacy and quantitative literacy. Each of these domains are further subdivided into levels; from level 1 (lowest) to level 5 (highest) defined as what a reader at that level could be expected to do. This narrative of what literacy is, was based upon earlier work produced in the United States of AmERICa (US) in the 1980's and 1990's by the Educational Testing Service there. This was devised as part of a system designed to measure how individuals perform in standardised literacy assessments within a generalised and measurable construct of achievement namely, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). The IALS was conducted between 1994 and 1998 in North AmERICa, Australia and New Zealand as well as countries in Europe; in all 3000 people were tested in each country (Blum,

Goldstein & Guerin-Pace, 2003).

This literature review is an attempt to present a critique of existing theory of what the phenomenon of literacy is in relation to the definition presented from a functionalist perspective, and its role and purpose in a social context that exists in England. It is also the intention of this review to critique the basis of construction of a nationally applied yet non-mandatory adult literacy curricula in England in relation to the intent laid out by UK central government and to address its impact on teaching practices under its auspices in FE colleges. In this context the concept of what functional literacy is in relation to the functionalist perspective is defined by Moser (1999, p 103) thus: *functional literacy is equivalent to the achievement of level 1 of the BSA standards*. The BSA (Basic Skills Agency) standards at Level 1 sets out the reading, writing and spoken communication skills that adults are expected to display; for example, the writing skills at Level 1 of the BSA standards include the ability to write reports, letters or notes conveying up to four separate ideas (skills) and complete a simple form (task) etc. Functional literacy as adult literacy is therefore accepted as both skills based and task based where literacy as skills and literacy as tasks are synonymous within literacy as skills in a functionalist framework because no clear distinction between these different forms of literacy is offered.

Part one: Adult literacy

What is adult literacy?

The answer to the question posed is usually based on the following position: a condition in which a person can read and write. But when placed within a particular context and unpacked in relation to the ideological assumptions and social implications, it is clear within the context of

this literature review, in terms of social practices, that this definition is inadequate and lacks power and strength in relation to the conscious impact that many authors who attempt to define adult literacy intend. As Barton (1994, p 5) suggests, the term literacy in broad social relationships has become: *'a code word, a symbolic system of complex views of what is involved in practises of communications generally'*

Authors who define literacy from a humanist perspective including the emphasise on adult literacy for personal and social development (Barnardo, 1998; Freire, 1973; O'Neil, 1977) define the phenomenon in relation to the human need and impact; for example Howard (2006, p 32) states that: *Learning literacy is about conceptual, social, cultural, emancipatory, technical and mechanical processes, and therefore about skills as well as social and cultural inclusivity.* This is synonymous with Papen's (2005) reading of Freire's *critical literacy* which refers to the potential for adult literacy to be seen as a humanist pursuit that culminates in not only the reading of the word but also the ability to read the world. This translates to the learners of adult literacy as their ability to read their social environment and understand positions within it that are occupied by themselves and others.

Critical literacy, as Freire developed it, moves away from the utilitarian vocational meanings (Rassool, 1999, p 8) of the functional model, towards a pedagogy that aims to allow participants to understand their world in terms of justice and injustice, power and oppression, and so ultimately to transform it (Papen, 2005, p 11)

The broad genre of critical literacy does not conceptually reduce the enigmatic nature of defining what literacy is in a world that is constantly changing both socially and politically. What it does do when literacy is viewed from a humanist perspective, is highlight the implication that there is an acceptance of systematic dehumanisation when the value of the human adult to society becomes reduced because of the focus placed on their inability to contribute to England's competitiveness in the global marketplace. Moser (1999, p 3) states:

Improving their basic skills can enable people to earn more, to spend more, to help the economy grow faster. The benefits to industry and the economy may be hard to calculate, but they must be vast.

Agreement with the objectification of the adult is implied within the insistence that adult functional illiteracy has adverse effects on the economy. By implication, those who are functionally illiterate (the stigmatised), bear some responsibility for national economic deficiencies. Howard (2006, pp 31-32) states:

Dominant forms of publicly funded LLN [literacy, language & numeracy] learning since the 1980's have focussed on the skills of individuals and their use value to the economy... it is predicated on skills and wider attributes which are judged lacking in individuals, who are then seen as inadequate as people

The rhetoric of the OECD (1995 & 2003) and Moser (1999) put forward a definition of literacy

that seemingly stems from a modernist need for order, systems and stability embedded in which the willingness to create centralised structures is believed to ultimately support a national economy that competes in a global marketplace. Darcovich (2000) supports this position and presents that within this context the necessary functions that define literacy, are from the perspective of what structures need to be in place if an industrial society it is to achieve or facilitate the level of social functioning it desires for its people. The willingness of Darcovich, Moser and the OECD to define adult literacy within a functionalist context would as Coulby and Jones (1995, p 38) insist, stem from a '*supremacy of the market fundamentalist economics*' position which when coupled with the introduction of a national curriculum for adult literacy, stating what skills and techniques ought to be taught, firmly places adult functional literacy within the context of '*modernist knowledge*'. This is a position that could be effectively challenged from a post-modernist perspective but is beyond the realm of this study.

The perceived order and prescriptive '*rationale*' (Moser, 1999, p 10) of the functionalist imply by definition, that alternate, independent systems produce opposite states that are dysfunctional or not functioning. This is an inference that is validated by Levine's analogy (1986, p 27) where he states that notion of illiteracy was treated like the epidemic disease malaria '*...it was seen as a kind of cultural pathogen susceptible to complete eradication by widespread administration of a standardised educational treatment.*' Even UNESCO (1951, p 1) state that '*Illiteracy is part of a tragic circle of under production, malnutrition and endemic disease. The circle can not be broken by an attack on only one of these elements.*' Klages (1997) suggests that every attempt to create order always demands the creation of an equal amount of disorder or at least the belief that disorder exists. The disorder of not being functionally literate or illiteracy became a disease and

was grouped alongside other social debilitates. Lyotard (1984) presents that totality, stability and order are maintained in modern societies through grand narratives, that is, the stories a culture tells itself about its practises and beliefs in order to justify regulated change.

The Moser report (1999) presents a contradictory grand narrative that appears to reflect the presuppositions of a central government position. This central position implies that previous and current systems with alternative definitions of what adult literacy is were chaotic, unstructured, uncoordinated and uncontrolled. And truth can be seen in this belief when the teaching of adult literacy prior to 2002 is seen as a part of a whole inadequately funded and under resourced adult basic skills phenomenon (Fowler and Mace, 2005). The construct that Moser presents, therefore, becomes a belief that privileges and openly supports one analysis and interpretation of the situation without fully acknowledging the value base of the author or the central authority. Despite this, Moser (1999, pp 26-27) does acknowledge that previous and current systems for teaching literacy to adults in England have been effective in doing so. Then why the need for functionalist curriculum reform and the creation of different cultural norms in teaching adult literacy? Perhaps the answer to this fundamental question lays somewhere within Gray's definition of functional literacy that was presented some forty three years prior to Moser's Report (Gray, 1956, p 24)

a person is functionally literate when he [sic] has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group (Gray, 1956, p 24).

Levine (1986, p 29) argues that Gray's positioning is '*intentionally relativistic*' and sets different thresholds of adult literacy for different social contexts. In Moser's case the community is England and within it is the creation of a relativist juxtaposition in which the variables are set within standards embodied within fixed minimum levels of orthodox and conventional benchmarks, such as those that operate for school children of a certain age within the English compulsory education sector, and ultimately have become enshrined in legislation. Papen (2005) also offers a response to the question of the need for functionalist curriculum reform in adult literacy teaching. She presents this response from a perspective set in a context that is coloured not only by the presence and impact of the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, in England, but also by a suggested affinity with Freire's (1972) *critical literacy* and Barton's (1994) *literacy as social practice*:

key terms such as economic efficiency, global competitiveness and restructuring the economy moved to the forefront of political debate throughout the industrialised world... the belief in human resource development as an essential factor in determining a country's economic success increasingly shaped adult basic education policies in Europe, North AmERICA and Australia... the resulting shift to a strong focus on vocational outcomes can be observed in many other countries. At the same time, other goals for adult education related to personal development, social justice and democracy, have receded into the background (Papen, 2005, p 82).

Culture

The statements made within the work of Powell (n.d, p 3) illustrates the basis for what Barton (1994) referred to as the broader social relationships and the complexities of defining what literacy is:

Literacy is a term that is beginning to take on less concrete meaning...no common meaning, but a condition accepting of society defining its own literacy in light of its expectations for its adult citizens
(Powell, n. d., p 3)

Although seemingly humanist, further reading of Powell's work reveals that he presents this statement from a functionalist perspective where he offers a hierarchy for literacy skills that supports the prominence of functional literacy in society and argues that only upon reaching this pinnacle can individuals have the power and freedom to meet any conditions imposed. The implication being that the *society* that Powell refers to is actually central government and that it is they who will define the context which may or may not be representative of what individual adults want. In effect, it is the ideological offerings of the society's representatives and the interpretation of their intent that will define literacy, making Powell's assumption one that would be acceptable in both camps.

The truthfulness and practicality of Powell's assumption is borne out by the work of Street (1993, p 1) who stated that people will transform literacy to their own cultural concerns and interests and as such he refers to them as '*vernacular literacies*'. The relevance of Powell's

assumption is also illustrated by the work of Gregory and Williams (2000). They offer no specific examples of what they consider adult literacy to be but they do adopt a generalist ethnographic perspective in which they acknowledge that an understanding of literacy requires detailed, in depth accounts of actual practice and purpose in different cultural settings. This is a notion of adult literacy that is supported by the humanist perspectives of authors like: Freire (1973), Moyle (n.d.) and O'Neil (1977). Moyle and O'Neil, suggest that the purpose of adult literacy for the individual defines different types of functionalism within the context of an individual's learning goals which will be influenced by cultural impositions or freedoms imposed within societies. But this seemingly utopian vision does not reflect the mass education culture of the adult literacy '*massification process*' that the UK central government has legislated for in England as part of a national strategy. Freire's reflective illustration in *Education versus Massification* (1973, pp 32 - 41) states that when literacy is viewed as part of a massification process, the purpose of adult literacy is derived from the perspective of the functionalist policy makers, supposedly democratically representative and that the adult literacy curricula they have developed ensures that their central cultural perspective, defines what literacy is, then underlies and prescribes the learning goals of individuals regardless of what they, as learners, perceive their own cultural context or their own purpose for learning.

Further examination of Gregory and Williams (2000) demonstrates how they go on to challenge what they consider to be a '*convincing assumption*'. The assumption being, that economic poverty equates with low literacy skills as opposed to cognitive, cultural and linguistic deficits in which the individual is a product of his own internal and external environments and that the responsibility for this condition is partly that of the individuals' and largely that of society.

Within cultures that demand what I call functionalist uniformity, the consequence of the convincing assumption, is as Baynham, (1995, p 7) suggests a '*culture of silence*' in which those who are illiterate keep quiet about it and engage in functional strategies; that is, practical responses and behaviours to mask the inadequacies engendered within the context of this norm.

Although apparently supportive of the principle of functional literacy for all adult citizens, Carey (1997, p 13) surmises that literacy should not be defined within the context of '*illiteracy verses literacy*' or the '*haves and the have nots*'. But as Hoyles (1977, p 18) acknowledges from a historical perspective, once a system of technical written and verbal communications is invented or a system is defined, people have to be initiated into its conventions and this traditionally tends to be the select few. In acknowledging that adult literacy as social practice is potentially available to all adult citizens in first world, western states today, it is also generally accepted as suggested by Freire and Macedo (1987) that the '*have nots*' exist here too but are and remain hidden by various political systems that have created newly constructed cultural norms and skill orientated conventions into which all who can participate are supported to do so.

The creation of new literacy norms in first world states appears to recreate a situation generally associated with non first world societies where Hoyle's premise, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2003), is very much in evidence; that is, there is an easily identifiable uninitiated population that will need to be inducted into the cultural conventions of the literacy defined within a functional literacy context. The egalitarian stance of the OECD (1995 & 2003) defines literacy from a global capitalisation and *massification* perspective in which participating adult citizens are implicated as belonging to a single culture

regardless of personal identity or cultural circumstance. This premise appears to be the basis from which the OECD makes its comparisons. But as Hamilton and Barton (2000) point out, the validity of the OECD position is questionable because of its failure to acknowledge the importance and impact of culture in relation to personal perspectives or perceptions of individual identity in the lives of adult citizens.

Ownership

Social consciousness-raising texts such as those written by Freire and Macedo (1987, p.xii), define literacy as a form of cultural politics. Further defined, it becomes a set of practices that either empower or disempower individuals, and where self-determination and personal autonomy are key factors in relation to the ownership of skills and the way they are to be used. This is a construct that appears to support the principles of andragogy as presented by authors such as Rogers (2002) who acknowledges throughout that self-directedness in adult learning promotes learner autonomy and empowerment. But the notion of empowerment presupposes that the adult learner has little or no power to begin with; a notion which in itself colludes with the delegitimization of the adult student in the inequality of the student-teacher relationship dynamic. Structurally, *'the teachers are in the more powerful position; as experts, as assessors - paid to know more than those they are teaching'* (Fowler & Mace, 2005, p 76). Between teacher and learner built-in inequality already exists where to empower the learner, the teacher would have to relinquish some power. In acknowledging the structural inequality apparent in the teacher, adult student dynamic, both Brookfield (1986) and Rogers (2002) present concepts of the adult learner that are defined or characterised by the reality of how the adult learner is facilitated to make conscious and informed choices about how to achieve their own learning

ambitions; by quoting Cherre (1983) Brookfield (1986, p 57) cites, '*to be resourceful and to be independent do not equal the achievement of autonomy.*' As an extension of this argument, self-directedness as a concept of ownership in adult learning moves away from the notions of facilitation, to a state where *process and reflection* converge in the pursuit of raising consciousness about or within a context of the knowledge being transmitted. This, together with an awareness of the cultural values, beliefs and moral codes recreates the social structures within that context. As a consequence, ownership means that adult learners can interpret and recreate their own personal and social worlds but actual control of learning in reality is only ever implied (Brookfield, 1986, pp 57-59). Conceptual pacification in the consciousness of the adult learner is created in a context where learning becomes defined by the converging of the processes of perceiving personal value, feeling in control and having a sense of taking responsibility for oneself. Within this, literacy learning and its ownership are constructs of complex psychological factors that determine the outcomes of participation for the individual learner (Vygotsky, 1978; Brookfield, 1986; Rogers, 2002; Merrifield et al, 2007). What emerge are notions that ownership of learning perpetuates power because conceptually, in the mind of the adult learner obvious intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes may be consciously perceived as being self-directed.

Brookfield (1986) openly praises the position of Knowles (1980), who maintains that self-directedness in adulthood defines the social roles and autonomy of the adult as parent, spouse, worker and citizen. The position occupied by Rogers and Knowles appears not to fit the prescriptive literacy behaviours defined under the banner of functional literacy, as endorsed by Carey (1997), Darcovich (2000) and Moser (1999). The Moser Report favours policy driven by

order achieved through processes of standardisation, generalisation and measurability which would, by definition, undermine the autonomy of the individual adult learner and what it means to be an adult citizen in OECD states. Ownership for the adult learner must, according to Brookfield (1986, p 57), go beyond learning to be '*a good disciple within tangible parameters confined by unchallenged assumptions, expectations and goals*' If adult learners have not had an active role in deciding what is taught, it is unlikely that they will perceive that they own the outcomes stemming from their participation. Consequently, individual ownership of learning could not be construed as a factor that features prominently in a schedule to improve adult literacy as a series of skills, en masse. Poor functional literacy or illiteracy, as defined by Moser, may have adverse effects on the earning potential and employment prospects of an adult. The added knock-on effect would be that the adult's ability to make a positive contribution to the national economy would be significantly reduced or become burdensome.

In criticism of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) which was developed and promoted by the OECD, Hamilton and Barton (2000, p 383) charge it with failure to acknowledge the complexities of literacy in social practice and its meaningfulness in the lives of the adults surveyed. Therefore, defining literacy as a collection of functional behaviours or skills in OECD states, fails to acknowledge that literacy is best understood in the context of its ownership and use and that the implicit or explicit ideologies of one cultural state within the OECD, may be totally different from that of another. In recognising that a sense of ownership is empowering in the consciousness of the adult learner, Baynham (1995) and Freire (1973) both imply that whatever the definition of literacy presented, it should be done so in relation to its impact and social purpose in the non-static lives of adult learners. To be literate in a social

context is a position that can create, recreate and exchange meaning over a period of time, and needs to be understood in terms of its power.

Power

The existence of themes such as power within texts generally, appears to suggest to the reader that knowledge and power are bedfellows and reinforces the assumption that those who hold the most knowledge are the most powerful. Powell (n.d., p 3) presents a somewhat blinkered and generalised argument in stating that functional literacy gives individuals the power and freedom to meet conditions imposed by society without assistance and that without literacy a person can not be truly free. The implication being that without literacy as a series of functional skills (functional literacy) a person has limited or no power and freedom. How Powell defines these assumption-burdened terms is not apparent in the discourse he has produced thus leaving him open to misinterpretation. But as O'Neil (1977) suggests, the situation implied by Powell (n.d.) in relation to the illiterate would need to be constructed within a defined socio-political and cultural context which Powell fails to do; although, it is clear that Powell probably views his literacy phenomenon from a first world perspective which pinpoints the context somewhat. In his work O'Neil (1977, p 74) defines a phenomenon he calls '*proper literacy*' as a process in which an individual can bring his '*knowledge to bear on what passes before him*' a position which is questioning society and its power structures and ultimately challenging its norms and policy makers. In defining what it is to be literate in these terms O'Neil has moved literacy from the physically tangible, one-dimensional state of the functionalists to that of a process that becomes a skill of consciousness which is concerned with an individual's ability to process information internally; not necessarily as a political mechanism but as a general tool of personal perception

and thought. Bernardo (1998, p 6) offers some exploration of this theme when he defines literacy within the context of its '*cognitive consequences*' and also presents it as a tool of the mind. However, Bernardo (ibid) moves away from the non-text dependent reactionary process of O'Neil's proper literacy, to a state in which the word becomes processed within the mind and literacy works as a '*cultural amplifier*' in relation to how people develop consciousnesses and think, imagine and act on elements of their own environment and experiences. In all, literacy as social practice ultimately depends upon the social conventions that they recognise, the personal identity of the individual, their cultural status and the dynamics of the power base within their social context. And this is never a static situation but constantly changes within a social construct where the adult is defined by the conventions apparent within the construct and also by self and social referencing which according to Brookfield can '*comprise of valuable curricular resources*'. In this same context, Brookfield (1986, p 2) commends Gagne (1971) for having observed that: '*Every adult's stock of prior learning and experience coheres into a unique, idiosyncratic mediatory mechanism through which new experiences and knowledge are filtered.*' In essence, defining what adult literacy is in such a context would be problematic for an individual adult learner, let alone groups or nations of adult learners.

The process of defining literacy, in which the phenomenon is developed and shaped, appears to be closely associated with the perceived ideological purpose, role and the intended impact it has on a society; that is, adult literacy is best defined and understood by its context of use. On the most part, it is viewed as the skills of an individual person or as a technical and functional construct to support socio-economic endeavours. Whatever position is occupied, the processes used to define adult literacy are complex and often critical but never neutral or value free.

Part 2: Cultural Invasion

The absence of dialogue

The defining of literacy from a functional perspective appears to have given rise to the introduction of adult literacy curricula in OECD states. The evidence for this is found in Carey (1995), Darcovich (2000), LSDA (2001), Moser (1999) and the OECD (1995 & 2003); whom describe perspectives that promote functional adult literacy provision and support the emergence of the adult literacy curricula. Paradoxically, amongst these texts there appears to be an absence of evidence of dialogue between those who developed the curricula and those the curricula were intended for and this situation is summed up succinctly by Fowler and Mace (2005): *'Adult literacy teachers and learners were somewhat left out in this period of committees and agendas'* (Fowler and Mace, 2005, p ix). Fowler and Mace (ibid) in turn, cite Hamilton, Macrae and Tett (2001, p 37): *'In none of these settings does there appear to be a strong professional voice moderating the official policy agenda. This is in contrast to what has happened in school -based reforms in the past 10 years, where teachers have influenced the new assessment and curricular'* This is akin to what Freire (1973, p 111) calls *the anti-dialogical theory of action'* which he declares is an example of cultural invasion where the invader penetrates another cultural-historical situation and imposes a system of values in which the invaded becomes an object. Freire's apt response, although very relevant, is ultimately an emotional and subjective interpretation that appears to stem from his consciousness and perception of the politics of literacy teaching in Brazil as it was in the 1950's and 1960's .

What is being acknowledged in the use of Freire in this context is the existence of theoretical

sociological parallels between what happened in the Brazil of then and what was happening in England up to September 2001 with the introduction of the Skills for Life Strategy in relation to how adult learners of literacy and their teachers were perceived as being given a narrow and defined stakeholder role with the introduction of what is essentially curriculum-based diktat ultimately developed to achieve centrally defined socio-economic goals.

Doubtful methodology

we recommend continued participation in the OECD International Adult Literacy Survey. Although reservations have been expressed about the size of the sample and some technical aspects, it provides the best comparative information about how we as a nation measure up ...We note that the IALS is now being revised (Moser, 1999, p 83).

Moser (1999) cites the rhetorical sentiments of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD, 1995) and their ideological basis for the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and uses this to reinforce his recommendation for national curricula in adult literacy programmes. The integrity of the IALS has been in doubt beyond the vague technical aspects that Moser (ibid) acknowledges; for example, researchers such as Hamilton and Barton (2000, p 383) implicated its validity because it had a strong US bias and therefore charged it with exhibiting an obvious cultural bias that could not be culturally relevant or appropriate in the other OECD countries in which the surveys were carried out. This calls into question the validity

of the methodology used by the IALS in relation to how assessment questions had been framed. Hamilton and Barton (2000, p 382) aptly state: '*IALS methodology throws the baby of literacy out with the bath water of culture*' With further reference to the IALS methodology, Carey (2000, p 1) points out another technical aspect that further damages the integrity of the survey that starts at its introduction into OECD states:

Respondent understanding of what the survey was about was far from universal and it varied both within and between countries. In all countries that took part in the IALS respondents would have been sent a letter asking them to take part in the survey. The title of the survey varied across countries and in some countries such as France, it did not explicitly use the word 'literacy' in the title. For many particularly in France, there was a discrepancy between their expectations of what the survey would be like and their experiences.

Texts concerned with the socio-political and cultural dimensions of defining literacy (Baynham, 1995; Freire, 1973; Hoyles, 1977) imply that in order for any assessment of adult literacy to be carried out, cultural context must be explicit in the questions set. It could be argued that the OECD (2003) in its support of the IALS research and the subsequent policy induced adult literacy curricula developed in OECD countries such as England, is, in effect, redefining and has reconstructed not only the concept of adult literacy but also that of being adult in social practice and the contribution adult literacy makes in economic terms. This is a paradigm that fits into the

wider context of rationalisation through forced uniformity which is encapsulated by the economic perspectives of the UK central government between 1997 and 2001, up to the development of the Skills for Life Strategy (2001). According to Sim (2002) the state is subordinate to economic imperatives, therefore the social democracy espoused by the New Labour government thrives on uniformity and a measured allocation from the top, and in so doing, implies that diversity and choice are difficult to accommodate unless managed within defined parameters; hence a central willingness to coerce the use of the IALS as a basis for universal comparisons and eventual change. The paradox of this situation is addressed by Hamilton and Barton (2000) who are resolute in their rejection of the validity of the IALS questionnaires and in turn questioned what was actually measured by this survey.

Darcovich (2001) and Kedney (n.d) argue that the position adopted by the OECD in relation to the IALS fosters a conception of adult literacy that, once achieved, is a stable, measurable, and one-dimensional state that will give adults the power and freedom to be self sustaining and involved within a global movement towards more knowledge-based societies. Both authors fail to acknowledge that having a more knowledge based society does not have the guarantee of participation or passivity of all its adult citizens or guaranteed economic prosperity neither locally, nationally or globally. This criticism of Darcovich and Kedney is endorsed by Hamilton and Barton (2000, p 387) who state that *'the IALS is a consensus of values and a construction designed to keep alive the powerful myth that prosperity follows from literacy and in doing so, unreasonably elevates expectations of what literacy can achieve in economic terms'*. Freire, according to Goulet's introduction (in Freire, 1973, p xi) is said to insist that methodological failings can always be traced to ideological errors, where paternalism and social control are

implicit and from which equality and dialogue are omitted.

Part 3: Changes and consequence

Inevitabilities:

The further education (FE) college in England provides an educational context where change is constant and inevitable as deemed by Jameson & Hillier (2003) and Lucas (2004). The FE sector is a unique and diverse sector of post compulsory education and training and serves a large number of learners that range in age from fourteen years plus. Its provision is a climate that is responsive to local learning needs and where prescriptive funding regimes dictate professional practices and thus cultural templates at both institutional level and perhaps more fundamentally at the level of the relationship between teachers and learners. The diversity of the FE sector has meant attempts to create a concise and consistent definition since its insurrection in the nineteenth century have not been realised (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Jameson & Hillier, 2003; Lucas, 2004). This view is also supported Wallace (2004) who go further to argue that the sector is so vast that its diversity alone, defies analysis and is itself a double-edged sword as it implies perhaps a lack of deference and inevitable divisions. Any weaknesses in FE provision become evident as funding priorities change and are directed at certain groups of learners and their providers at the exclusion of others. When these groups are no longer the educational priority and funds and resources are diverted and reallocated elsewhere, this has damning consequences too. Recently, in this financially vulnerable sector, the most damning consequence to teachers has been their professional and social redundancy, in light of the loss of other adult courses that do not come under the *Skills for Life* mantra of '*entitlement to learning*' (BSA, 2001, p 1; Moser, 1999, pp 42-45). The following is taken from the University and College Union (UCU) website:

UCU is campaigning to challenge the government's funding priorities for further and adult education which are wreaking havoc in branches in colleges and adult education services across the country. Thousands of adult education courses and hundreds of UCU members' jobs are at risk. By the government's own admission, up to 500,000 adult learners risk losing their courses as a result of its new priorities for post-16 education. At the same time, thousands of learners face the prospect of paying large fee increases for their courses... Determined to improve the skills and employability of British people to make this country more internationally competitive the government has set new national priorities for FE and is targeting funding at very specific groups of learners and courses. They include... Skills for Life (literacy, numeracy and IT) for adults... further closures and redundancies are expected from September 2006. (UCU n.d.)

Jameson and Hillier (2003, p 3) developed what is construed as a working summary that defines what the FE sector was in 2003 and it is presented below in recognition that at the time of writing their description of the situation for the FE sector is still relevant and easily recognisable:

A patchy history of marginalisation... poorly funded learners and often overworked staff

Increased central regulation over-seen through inspection and funding regimes is perceived. In consideration of protracted benefits, subsequent changes aim to promote in the context of the adult literacy teacher's role, perceptions of calls for new forms of professionalism, social practices and teacher-learner relationships emerge. In this arena, Bathmaker and Avis (2005) ask the extremely apt question: '*is that tingling feeling enough?*' The response to this question is subjective and the aspects involved vary between one teacher and the next. It is, however, a fundamental question that deserves careful consideration by those who want to join the profession, those who are new to it and those of us who are well established and experienced in the field. Despite recognising that change in the FE institutions is inevitable, the impact of implementing curricula in a teaching lifetime in FE, where once there was none has been a challenge that needed careful management and that had required considerable adjustment on the part of the teaching professionals involved in service delivery (Apple, 2002; Jameson and Hillier, 2003; Quigley, 2006). Respect from managers, policy makers and the government for the ethos and established cultural norms within the relevant FE college departments amongst teaching professionals, is, according to Jameson and Hillier (2003, pp 3 - 6) *assumed* rather than a reality. It is the inevitability of this assumption which has the ability to determine teacher perceptions and subsequent emotional and practical responses to the changes engineered; particularly when constrained by time, the pressure for results and the demand on resources. Further pressures are assumed as inevitable when increases in student numbers within Skills for Life provisions have also been reported (DFES, 2003).

Calls came for functional skills improvement, standardisation and consistency to improve what

was already available. One of the loudest calls came from the then Labour government's Secretary of State for Education and Employment in 1998, the Right Honourable David Blunket, MP (Moser, 1999, pp 2-5). The Labour government that was elected consecutively in 1997, 2001 and 2005, ensuring the uninterrupted process of what Young (2000) refers to as neo-conservative progress of central government education policy agenda in the context of adult literacy.

The Moser Report's sixteenth recommendation: '*Only basic skills qualifications based on this new curriculum should be funded from the public purse*' (Moser, 1999, p 88) appears to have encouraged authors like Bathmaker and Avis (2005), to suggest a justification of: '*he who pays the piper calls the tune*' (Anon). Presumably, this is in a context where it can be argued that the government has to manage limited resources and is bound to want to define how their funds are spent, what should be achieved in terms of adult functional literacy, language and numeracy skills, and in terms of how these skills should be transmitted. The role of adult literacy providers and practitioners, as implied by Bathmaker and Avis (2005) and Hamilton et al (2006) is then presumably defined in terms of helping the government see how this should be implemented, achieved and defined rather than be seen as an ideological battleground. In a context that embraces the structural functionalism theories of, for example, Radcliffe-Brown (1952) which espoused the contribution made by social phenomenon laddened with the values and beliefs of those who hold power, this is designed to be part of what the powerful see as the preservation of a greater social whole. This is where the theoretical perspective that engenders the implementation of adult literacy curricula as an assumed consensus of values and beliefs facilitates the acquisition and ability to be deemed functionally literate. The social behaviours in the adult who engages in adult literacy learning programmes funded under these circumstances

become part of a seemingly autocratic, centrally controlled and political strategy. A strategy which appears to have been designed to ensure consistency, standardisation and generalised provision in which practitioners need to examine their roles in terms of the critical interdependency of their professionalism and relationships between themselves, the adult literacy Core Curriculum and their adult students.

Discourse that presents a perspective on adult literacy in terms of its global impact on national economy (Darcovich, 2000; OECD, 1995 and 2003; Moser, 1999), also tend to indicate a philosophical framework that supports the premise that functional literacy together with subjects like numeracy and language are rhetorically and fundamentally more important in economic terms than other subjects. These values are then to be transmitted to adult learners via learning curricula underpinned with ideology about the relationship between England's and Britain's global economic standing and the functionally literate behaviours of its adult citizens. As Kelly (2004) suggests, the operational management of a curriculum depends upon the educational ideology within it being made explicit rather than pretend there is no ideology at all. In the context of the adult literacy curricula, central policy makers are to be applauded in this respect.

Accordingly, Bathmaker and Avis (ibid) suggest that those who are responsible for the day to day management of the educational departments in which literacy is taught and for those who transmit the values and beliefs underpinning the adult literacy curricula, that is, those who actually teach adult literacy, use the curricula and dip into its prescription and accessible resources, need at least an awareness that tacit acceptance and promotion of the ideological and epistemological aspects of the curricula impacts upon the professionalism of teachers as

educators and upon teacher–learner relationships within and outside of classrooms. In support of this, van den Berg (2002) emphasizes that existing cultures become endangered whenever change is encountered within educational institutions and acknowledges an assumption of the potential effects on already beleaguered and endangered teaching cultures when he reiterates what Bathmaker and Avis suggest with: *'altering the ethos and culture within teaching and learning departments ...and teacher meaning regarding educational practice'* (van den Berg, 2002, pp 577-579).

Relationships

Writers on the subject of curriculum change and implementation in the post compulsory education and training sector, appear to be in no doubt that a curriculum implementation process also impacts upon existing and developing professional identities of individual teachers. Papen (2005) and Bathmaker & Avis (2005b) for example, present that whilst there is an acceptance of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) as: a useful teaching and learning tool; qualification inroads to adult learners within the context of an established qualification framework, and the basis for adult literacy specialist teacher qualification. But there still is an underlying concern that there needs to be a possibility for democratic forms of practice within the changing context of the FE teacher's work in general. And within this context, all teachers, both the trainee and the established, should be making sense of the relationships between themselves and their learners and about new forms of perceived professionalism and practice within their own teaching and learning contexts. Lucas (2004) supports this position and further suggests that the current era in FE must skip to a new beat that advocates the balancing of subject knowledge with teaching,

and teacher-learner relationship knowledge as the basis for the making of a sector-specific teacher. This is particularly since the emergence of the concept of key skills of which literacy is one of the skill areas, and as such creates the basis of other debates about adult literacy. This is not to suggest that there is only one professional identity open or common to the adult literacy specialist under the auspices of the ALCC because it is assumed that fragmentation exists in relation to the individual's professional identity as a teacher within the various cultural identities that may exist in the institution. This includes the cultures found departmentally in terms of what is delivered and how it is to be delivered. Fragmentation may be evident between individuals teaching the same subject matter where the subject matter is deemed to be the main influence on teaching methods, pedagogic beliefs and the interpretation of a curriculum.

little discussion takes place among FE teachers concerning the relationship between how something is taught and the knowledge of the person teaching it or the balance to be found between the content of teaching and the teaching itself... All recent policy initiatives... have been taking place within a fragmented and impoverished professional culture which has a tendency towards compliance to the latest initiative rather than engaging in and changing policy (Lucas, 2004, p170).

Even the suggestion of compliance becoming the basis of a set of *pedagogic assumptions* and a sector-specific and umbrella like concept, also suggests that the subject matter being taught is the motivation to both teach and learn for the teacher and learner respectively. The implication here is that this situation may suit the needs of a task driven, professional pedagogue but not

necessarily the learning needs of the adult learner because the teacher learner relationship becomes more about initiating the adult learner into the system of education that the presence of a demanding adult literacy curriculum calls for. It could be argued that this is where the initiation of the adult learner is the pedagogic standard that is set for the teacher by the teacher's own compliance (initiation and pedagogic training) into the use of the ALCC as an adult literacy subject specialist's and non-specialist's teaching tool.

Knowles (1980, p 46) states that the '*psychological definition of adulthood is when the individual perceives themselves as essentially self-directing*'. When this is applied in a context that suggests that the teaching of adult literacy has become an expression of the ALCC, this brings into question whether *learner centeredness* and *self directedness* (which are concepts traditionally associated with the teaching of adult learners and being treated as an adult) are just expressions of the beliefs and values of the individual teacher as opposed to the basis of the teacher- learner relationship facilitated under the auspices of the curriculum. In the teacher-adult learner skills based dynamic that the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) pertains to, Tennant (1996) suggests that the first step in terms of establishing the ideal, is to examine how power is distributed within the relationship. According to Tennant, if it follows Freire's model, then power sharing truly occurs for mutual benefit; '*The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach.*' (Freire, 1972, p 49). The equity of power for teacher and adult learner within Freire's liberalist stance would theoretically promote a mutually beneficial transformative process but, by implication could not fit comfortably into a skills driven approach in the presence of the ALCC in the FE context and its espousing of functionalism and codification in the setting of standards

that adult learners are to achieve. Equity, in the teacher learner dynamic could not easily be facilitated because other pressing priorities exist, particularly for the teacher in relation to measuring learner skills performance against given target standards and the completion of administrative tasks which are ever present. The liberalist stance of Freire's model may fit more neatly into the model of assumptions of andragogy as presented by Knowles (1980, p 43) who states that andragogy is *'simply another model of assumptions about learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions'*. Here andragogy is not presented as a teaching strategy but as a set of assumptions that emphasize how the adult learner can learn from teachers who are themselves adult and theoretically open to learning from learners. This is representative of a theory of practice where the adult learner is involved in determining their own learning and which supposedly promotes a supportive rapport and power exchange system.

The notion of power sharing and self-determination as ideals within teacher-learner relations, illustrates how the introduction of the ALCC *'may have heralded a cultural movement...away from the andragogic theoretical models of teaching'* (Reece & Walker, 2004, pp 59-88) presumably for the same reasons that the liberalist adult teacher - learner dynamic is unlikely under the auspices of the ALCC.

Tisdell (1995) supports the theoretical basis of Knowles' premise that the adult learner should be involved in planning and designing their own learning, and evaluating their the desired learning outcomes; emphasising the idea of the teacher promoting the concepts of self-direction and self-fulfillment of individual goals. This according to Tisdell (1995, p 49) *'is based on the idea of a humanistic learning philosophy and is concerned about the growth of the individual learner'*

But Tisdell (ibid) also charges andragogy with the following:

not concerned with social change or the empowerment of oppressed groups... it does not take account of the structural systems of privilege and oppression based on race, gender and class that informs learning and the motivation to learn...genERIC individualism and autonomy of the learner in the andragogy model as opposed to the need for connection and relationships in learning that ethnic minority and women learner groups in the United States crave. (Tisdell, 1995, p 49)

Despite obvious language, cultural and context differences, Tisdell's findings parallel with other industrialised western states (including England), when she charges that the educational systems are weighted in favour towards one particular grouping, where the typical beneficiary of androgical practices is white, male and middle to upper middle class. Apple (1990, p 82) supports this suggestion and argues that such a person would already be a product of an educational system and thus educational curricula (in all sectors), that has perpetuated and supported the development of this section of the class stratum.

what was often in the past a conscious attempt by the bourgeoisie to create a consensus that was not there, has now become the only possible interpretation of social and intellectual possibilities. What was first an ideology in the form of class interest has now become the definition of the situation in most... curricula (Apple, 1990, p 82).

This is a situation that was alluded to in Part One of this literature review and will not be explored any further here. Suffice to say that if this is the case, it would also be reasonable to also assume that the white, middle to upper middle class male would not typically be seeking the acquisition of adult basic education and specifically adult literacy skills in industrialised, first world, western societies because he would have gained sufficient literacy abilities much earlier in his life.

What can be taken from Tisdell is the notion of individualism that andragogy espouses and how this links with ideas of other adult learning theorists who have embedded andragogy with adult learning. Brookfield (1986) and Rogers (2002) for example, both assert that for the adult learner motivation to learn is predominantly from an intrinsic, individual and rationalised source based upon needs and wants as in the andragogic model and to a lesser extent, from social extrinsic sources as in pedagogic models. But Brookfield like Kerka (2002) implies that teachers must be careful about assuming that pedagogical teaching is polar opposite to andragogy in relation to how adults prefer to learn because defining theories about both sets of assumptions are context dependent. This is also endorsed by Rogers (2002, p 57) who states that: *'all this takes place within a context- a context which helps to determine the nature of the teacher-agency and the power relationships involved.'* This signifies that there are a number of relationships that come under the spotlight of relationship dynamics, including the respective teacher and learner relationships with the curriculum itself. What can be extrapolated from the pedagogy, andragogy debate is that any movement towards a more pedagogic model in the relationships between adult literacy learners and their teachers is symptomatic of the accepted belief on the part of those that

created the ALCC and thus the situation. The basis of the belief becomes that society is evolving too. And intrinsically coercive and pedagogic adult literacy curricula is developed and is perceived as promoting a didacticism in response to contrived societal shifts where teachers become the main agents of educational transformations (Young, 1998, p 175); and the learners themselves become contextually objectified until there is little, apart from age and volunteering to be educated, that distinguishes them from school children in their relationships with their teachers and the learning curriculum. According to Kelly, Soundranayagam and Grief (2004, p 16) it is important for educators and specifically teachers of adult literacy to recognise that there are significant differences between adult and child learners even if the way they learn is related or not.

Important differences between adult and child learners include the fact that most, though not all, adults may be presumed to have well-developed language and cognitive abilities, which can be used advantageously in teaching (Shaughnessy, 1977) Adults also bring with them a wealth of experience, which again can be exploited to enhance learning. Adult learners are also motivated to attain specific educational outcomes especially those that are immediately applicable to their lives. (Kelly, Soundranayagam and Grief, 2004, p 16)

In the presence of the Adult literacy Core Curriculum, perhaps this is, or becomes, the basis upon which teachers of adult literacy engage with their learners. Moreover, learner motivation to acquire what we as teachers want or need to deliver, can be time limited or conditional in relation

to how, what, when and if desired outcomes are achieved. Rogers (2002, p 95) boldly asserts:

To talk about persons not being motivated is to misunderstand the situation. They may not be motivated to learn what we want them to learn, but all adults are motivated to learn their own learning in their own way.

Plaudits and prophecy

There is what appears to be a politically biased standpoint that supports current government opposition claims that the New Labour Party, through processes Franklin (2004), calls ‘*Education, education and indoctrination*’ are ‘*strong on spin but weak on policy delivery*’ (Franklin, 2004, p 255). Whilst this may be an accurate depiction in a general sense, in the context of adult literacy this statement appears inaccurate because policy delivery for adult literacy has been undeniably effective in that institutions and adult literacy teachers have been compelled to embrace the principles of generalization, standardisation and consistency that the ALCC espouses despite it being non mandatory. The apparently politically neutral stance of Papen (2005) also presents a different picture that is made into a truth by a seemingly non-polarized, National Audit Office (N.A.O) report (N.A.O., HC20 session, December 2004), that illustrate that the current UK Labour government have succeeded in marrying policy spin to policy delivery in the context of adult literacy:

The steady growth in enrolments is impressive and there is little doubt that an increasing number of people do improve their language, literacy

and numeracy skills as demonstrated by learners who take and pass national tests. There is little doubt also that the current government takes seriously its responsibility for the education of...adults... This marks an important shift compared to the policies of the 1970's and 1980's when the states commitment to adult... literacy... was low (Papen, 2005, p 100-101)

The superlatives used to describe the outcomes of the government's efforts are challenged by authors such as Lodge (1998) in the context of discourse about the concept of 'critical literacy' and those of power dynamics and in the use of citations by the philosopher Bourdieu. Lodge (1998, pp 179-199) reminds us that the dominant literacy practice within the use of Standard English 'has both real and symbolic power' and perhaps more importantly represents something of a self-fulfilling prophecy in which: '

to be granted symbolic power is to acquire economic power and to acquire economic power is to maintain the symbolic power of the language variety by granting access to the literacy genres that are then used for assessment in the furtherance of policy aims

The presence of proof in terms of the current government's claim that improvement in adult literacy and adult literacy standards positively impacts upon and becomes symbolic of Britain's position in the global marketplace; at the time of writing had yet to be made available. Papen (2005) suggests that it is far too early to judge; Hillier (2006, p 62) supports this view but

acknowledges, 'The number of people gaining a basic skills qualification is an indication that one of the measures of success has been achieved'

Debate and re-state

The Adult Literacy Core Curriculum has the propensity towards what Helsing and Drago-Severson (2002, p 9) [Fig. 1] consider the *Great [Old] Debate* (old debate) in which literacy is being presented as a *Methods as Solutions* approach that involves the processes categorised as decoding, skills and whole language development. They cite Kucer's (2001) work *Dimensions of literacy* [Fig. 1] which presents that the old debate is actually on a continuum of what is considered the New Debate (new debate) in relation to the teaching of reading and writing in a school setting. Here generally, the contrast in emphasis is on the individual and cultural perspectives on adult literacy development and is presented as a conceptual basis for teaching literacy. Within the new debate *Critical Literacy* [Fig. 1] is seen as the solution to acquiring or achieving the capacity to be literate in a modern context. Here, what is presented as critical literacy by Helsing and Drago-Severson (2002) [Fig. 1] equates as the social practice *model* or literacy as a social practice that has been presented by Boyd et al (2004), Fowler and Mace (2005), Hamilton and Barton (1999), Papen (2005) and Quigley (2006). Within *Critical Literacy as Solution* [Fig. 1], and or literacy as social practice, the teaching of literacy and its development are perceived as being within socio-cultural dimensions. This is as opposed to the focus on the linguistic and the cognitive dimensions of teaching literacy as a series of technical skills.

Fig. 1 below shows aspects of the Old and New literacy debates as proposed by Kucer (2001).

These are presented as concepts within a continuum with the stated debates at the extreme ends and both limited by the purpose of what is taught as literacy. With the Great [old] debate the focus on the individual resonates throughout. There is the appearance that it tries to divorce the adult individual from a conceptually negated society. But it is contradictory as the literacy is also thought of as compensating for '*societal inequalities*'. Social inequality is a reality of society. The fundamentality of this Street (1984) argues, is that literacy activities cannot exist in isolation, and whether acknowledged or not, literacy is always part of the social and cultural context and could never just be a set of selected genERIC skills that reflect structures of power and identity. Particularly when one considers who or what had determined which literacy skills are to be taught and learnt. Kucer's 'New Debate' focuses on challenging overtly political issues such as social inequality but it appears to be at the expense of learning practical and technical skills associated with acts of reading, and writing as practices of literacy. McCaffey, Merrifield and Millican (2007, p 40) remind readers that, *literacy education does not have to be overtly political to take the radical approach of developing critical and reflective learners.*

Methods as Solution (the Great [Old] debate <-Decoding - Skills - Whole Language->	Critical Literacy as Solution (The New Debate)
A focus on the cognitive and linguistic dimensions of literacy teaching and development	A focus on the socio-cultural dimensions of literacy teaching development
Teaching and learning through the use of various methodologies, technologies, and materials.	Teaching and learning through high academic achievement expectations, acknowledging and valuing both the cultural competence of students and the development of the socio-political consciousness of teachers and students
Values the individual experiences of the student	Values the experiences of the various groups of which the student is a member
A focus on the personal; expression of self through individual narratives	A focus on the socialized; expression of self through group-group relationship narratives and critique
Critique of text as it relates to personal experiences	Critique of text as it relates to issues of power, dominance, and group-group relations

A tendency to see students as 'individuals' and classrooms as unrelated to the realities of the society	A tendency to see students as part of various socio-cultural groups and classrooms as reflecting the realities of the society
A reproduction of the socio-cultural aspects of society	Conscious attempt not to reproduce in the classroom the stratified realities of society; for example, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, dominance of males over females; a critique and challenge of socio-cultural aspects of society based on principles of justice, equity, and access
One-size-fits-all approach to teaching; methods are implemented in a vacuum	Many sizes for many types of students; methods are embedded within particular socio-cultural contexts and histories
Evaluates the impact of various methodologies on students' literacy learning	Evaluates the impact of the curriculum on students' abilities to critique texts and contexts
Student failure is due to not finding the 'right' teaching methods or to the disengaged students and the groups in which they hold membership	Student failure is due to the failure of the dominant culture to support no dominant groups; need a critical socio-historical view of educational institutions, teachers and learners
A reductionistic view of education	An expansive view of education
Methods as the necessary and sufficient condition for learning	Methods as necessary but insufficient condition for learning
Literacy teaching and learning and individual linguistic and cognitive actions	Literacy teaching and learning as social practices and group actions
Literacy learning as an avenue through which to compensate for societal inequalities	Literacy learning as part of a complex social, cultural, political, and economical puzzle by and through which groups are constructed and positioned

Fig 1. Dimensions of the continuum of limiting reading and writing to a spectral concept of literacy with the old debate (skills based literacy) and the new debate (critical literacy) at either end. (Kucer, 2001, pp 257-258 as cited in Helsing and Drago-Severson, 2002, p 9)

The emphasise of the old debate is on the individualisation of adult literacy learning and according to Torgerson et al (2004), this correlates with the *Effective Basic Skills Teaching for Adults* (BSA, 2000, p 11) which presents 'five teaching and learning strategy factors' [fig 2] that is 'based less on quantitative research than on its own and other expert views'. The five factors are sufficiently vague and could be interpreted and adapted into any system of adult literacy teaching and leaning that emphasizes a commitment to learners as an expression of teaching effectiveness.

The five factors that characterised effective adult literacy learning programmes :

- *Provide for acquisition of skills in a range of contexts meeting the motivation and interests of learners*
- *Delivery of clearly structured teaching*
- *Produce a learning plan for each learner*
- *Regularly assess and renew progress and adjust individual learning plans (ILPs) accordingly*
- *Adjust the length of programme to level of skills required*

Fig 2. Five factors that reflect effective teaching and leaning in adult literacy (BSA, 2000, p 11)

The *five factors* (fig 2) correspond to the findings acquired within research carried out under the auspices of the NRDC (National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy) whose research is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) as part of the Skills for Life national strategy; with the added disclaimer that, *'The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the department'*

Within the research report in question, Kelly, Soundranayagam and Grief (2004) discuss how the findings from empirical research relate to the body of knowledge in theoretical literature emphasising the teaching of adult literacy. Here Kelly et al report that writing, for example, is seen as a process that is intricately and delicately interwoven with the life of the individual learner. In effect suggesting that in actual teaching practice, the teaching of writing as a skill (old debate) [Fig. 1] in the affective adult learning situation should be part of a process that incorporates elements of the learner's socio-cultural existence because her learning can not be

dissociated from other lives in her social world (new debate). Similarly, in an interim report by Davis (2005) for the NRDC, a description as opposed to analysis as generalised in Fig. 2, is presented of the position occupied by teachers of adults in relation to how they have expressed preferences in teaching within the context of the Skills for Life infrastructure (including the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum- ALCC)

Our chief concern has been clarity of presentation rather than depth of analysis and hence is a work in progress... most practitioners occupied a middle ground where they recognised the extremes but tried to work with the opportunities and difficulties they encountered (Davis, 2005, pp 4-11).

This culminates into the suggestion that teachers of adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC as it was between 2002 and 2005 would in theory try to balance their approach to teaching on the continuum between the old and new debates [Fig. 1]. And fits neatly into the literacy as *literacies* debate (Hamilton and Barton 1999; Papen, 2005) in recognition of the many genres of practice associated with the teaching and learning of adult literacy in a socio-cultural context; for example, the diversity of the reading, writing, listening as well as genres of spoken communications systems in the multi-linguistic and multi-cultural context of numerous social practices that typically exist in the multi-faceted melting pot of London's (England), further education colleges. This fits neatly into the first of the five factors [Fig. 2] and its characterisations of the desired adult literacy teaching prior to the emergence of the ALCC.

To view adult literacy as the continuum of practices on a spectrum of conceptualised theories, is to risk, according to Fowler and Mace (2005) that adult literacy becomes too abstract and too theoretical to be of any practical use to the teacher. Mace argues from a literacy as social practice perspective, that teachers of adult literacy can *'understandably feel a little impatient with theory that has no immediate sign of helping the kind of practice they are paid to think about'* (Fowler and Mace, 2005, p vii) This acknowledges that a compulsion to incorporate theory into practice does exist because teachers strive to understand what it is they do or are expected to do and how they incorporate theory into professional and life long learning contexts. Where theory ends and practice begins is not easily distinguishable; and why and when the situation arises where teachers of adults might want to try to separate the two parts of the same whole would be to dismiss the impact that either has in the delivery of adult literacy. Mace emphasises the futility of this separation and continues:

The separation of practice from theory itself seems an oversimplification. In reality, any teacher, whether consciously or not, will have some theory of learning lurking somewhere in their heads, even if they have not articulated this out loud (Fowler & Mace, 2005, p vii)

A functionalist approach as signalled by the presence of the ALCC could be presented as a conceptualised, metaphorical, skeletal framework to which teachers of adult literacy attach the 'flesh' of their content in relation to chosen theories and methods of delivery. Theoretically, this attachment will make adult literacy into the entity it can and should be in the lives of adult literacy learners. Similarly, Helsing and Drago-Severson (2002) present a pragmatic and abstractedly unique concept of adult literacy as a metaphor of the quilt; in which the pieces of

different approaches to teaching are sewn together. However, in the quilt analogy as with the flesh on skeleton viewpoint, difficulties in perceiving adult literacy as a whole entity arise in practical terms, when the approaches and theories that make up the methodology and entity are perceived by teachers as complex and or parts of contrasting debates (old debate and new debate; pedagogy and andragogy; subject curriculum and college curriculum), and or as opposing and unrelated rivals mutually exclusive of the other (Quigley, 2006).

The consequence becomes that experienced teachers of adult literacy in FE colleges are left to choose from what they consider accessible in relation to theories and approaches. Teachers themselves piece the parts of theories and approaches together in an appropriately sequential way to construct the literacy being facilitated under the auspices of the requirements of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC). This is in the hope that what is delivered, is at least adequate in relation to addressing the literacy needs of adult learners, whilst reflecting the requirements of the ALCC, and no doubt in many cases, also having to simultaneously address the wider curriculum of the FE college (Appleby & Hamilton, 2005; Lucas, 2004).

The content, theory and method debates and subsequent confusion do not end here as Rogers' perspective and re-statement on the same themes illustrates:

The emphasis will thus vary according to whether the approach to learning is teacher-centred or learner-centred... this corresponds to what Bruner (1966) describes as the expository approach... where the mode and pace and style of the exposition are principally determined by the

teacher and the hypothetical approach in which the teacher and the student are in a more cooperative position... Others have made a distinction between decontextualised learning and contextualised learning...A content -/subject-based decontextualised approach tends to be teacher-centred, to emphasise the teacher's presentation methods... whereas a process-/methods-based contextualised approach will be more learner-orientated , more concerned with what the student participants do than what the teacher does. But this is not necessarily the case... Most of us need to adopt varied approaches...sometimes teacher-centred... sometimes learner- centred... sometimes... concerned with subject matter, sometimes with process (Roger, 2002, pp 210-211)

The pragmatist's view in the FE context of the teacher's interpretation of what and how adult learning should be delivered, would be not to emulate but to '*recognise the complexity, contradictions and messiness of educational practice*' (Bathwater and Avis, 2005, p 61). Whilst Young (1998) and Apple (2000 & 2003) remind teachers generally, of the following: that they, as well as students have a subordinate role in the curriculum development process, yet it is they who impart the knowledge that the curriculum espouses;

the development of the curriculum is driven at all stages by experts external to the process of educating the target population...that any learning at all occurs in this process is a tribute to the motivation and creativity of the teachers (Ross, 1995, p 4).

This illustrates what Bathwater and Avis (2005), Howard (2006), Lucas (2004), and Matheson

(2000) have suggested: all debates about content, go back to a position of re-focussing on teacher compliance (willing or otherwise) and becomes a question about the FE teacher's ability to re-forge her professionalism in an environment that may view her as a mere delivery agent or process worker. Her ability to be reflexive, reflective and responsive under the auspices of a learning curriculum that has rigorous inspection regimes attached, in what is already a demanding teaching arena may also be challenged. Lucas has seemingly restated this as: *'the line between pedagogy and a wider professionalism is becoming increasingly blurred.'* (2004, p 175)

Summary: Literacy in our contemporary context

As there are numerous forms of communication and therefore language, the process of trying to define literacy has been dubbed by Roberts (2005, p 32) as, *'a journey without end'*. Complexities that arise in trying to define adult literacy may stem from a sense of futility, or possibly a reluctance to appreciate that the word literacy, in social practice and consequence, means different things to different people. In what was described as *'Providing a very contemporary overview of literacy'* Papen (2005) poses within the descriptive discourse: would it be useful to think about literacies in the plural, and not literacy, in relation to examining literacy as a whole variety of social practices? A response to this question had been proposed by Roberts (2005) highlighting, that in the context of discourse written to define literacy that there is still some way to go in terms of a definitive consensus of what the core essence of adult literacy as practice (social or otherwise) is. In his contribution, Roberts (2005, p 29) puts forward a tentative rationalisation of why a framework should exist to analyse definitions of literacy and thus a statement of why literacy should reasonably be pluralized to *'literacies'* in our current

context.

Numerous definitions of literacy have been advanced by policy-makers politicians, academics, teachers and others over the years. It is not always easy, however, to know how one definition might relate to another or differ from it

This is clearly presented in recognition of the diversity of reading, writing, speaking and listening practices and the genres, styles and types of texts and spoken communications associated with various activities or social identities within the numerous multilingual and multicultural contexts that exist. The consensus in the contemporary context becomes that it is safe to reiterate the assumption that literacy, as a term, will never be a one-size-fits-all phenomenon and is not without a cognitive context. As a consequence, a single definition without a specific context is wholly inappropriate as it does not openly acknowledge the complexities in defining the values and beliefs within the human interaction witnessed in communication systems in different socio- cultural, ethnic, linguistic, political and economic settings (Appleby & Hamilton, 2005).

The concept of appropriacy arises when readers are led to assume that the term *literacy practices* is being used as a genERIC, umbrella term to describe the situated diversity of literacies as social practices. In a contemporary context, these *literacy practices* employ various forms of literacy in a variety of modern day acts of communication (Fowler and Mace, 2005; Hamilton, Hillier & Tett, 2006; Howard, 2006; Merrifield, 2006; Papen, 2005; Quigley, 2006). In essence, when

unfolding each contemporary context in relation to the complexities of its cultural products, it becomes obvious there would need to be further investigative work done in terms of the nature of the literacy practices witnessed.

Relief could be sought from a unique but complex philosophical framework for defining contemporary literacy practices. Roberts (2005) proposes that the model framework designed by the educational philosopher Scheffler (1960) that is intended to construct understanding and the delineation of situated education, could be used to inquire about and define what is essentially phenomenon with a *core meaning* for literacy that sets it apart from other related terms. But as acknowledged by Mautner (2000, pp 422-423), philosophy, as an intellectual and rational inquiry '*can itself be variously defined*' and subsequent debate and analysis where it is applied, '*can be subjectively weighted by personal ideology*' This argument is vindicated by Nicoll & Edwards (2004) and Hillier & Hamilton (2006) when they bring the whole concept of literacy back to the current England-situated context in their suggestion that all forms of defined literacy would be pitted against the persuasive and spun functionalist ideology in education policy. This pertains to a national adult curriculum and the dominant literacy it promotes, implying that any attempts to define contemporary literacy as otherwise would create or reinforce perceptions of contemporary adult literacy as being an ideological battleground.

Contemporary literacy practices as espoused by the ALCC are an assumed conceptualisation of literacies that embrace: firstly, the reality of dominant literacy practices which are essentially prescriptive, conventional and representative of what would be valued culturally in formal institutions and situations outside of the home; secondly, the dismissal of vernacular literacy

practices that use non standard forms of written and spoken language (Davis, 2005). Barton and Hamilton (1998) present a litmus test of Street's (1993) 'Vernacular literacies' and displays an obvious consensus when the vernacular practice is described as literacy practices that:

draw upon and contribute to vernacular knowledge. Often less valued by society and are not particularly supported, nor regulated, by external social institutions... vernacular literacy practices are learned informally... their roots in people's homes and in their upbringing (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, pp 251-252).

This is a description of vernacular literacies that Boyd, Brook and Rosenthal (2004), would apparently validate in their emphasis of contemporary teaching and learning practice in their somewhat idealised examination of literacy teaching in multilingual classroom settings. In this context they address the vernacular as a universally applied practice in relation to teacher ability to promote an acceptance of literacies influenced by those that are different, culturally validated, exist there and promote the concepts of considered pedagogy, inclusivity and empowerment. This is where the considered pedagogy is one that differentiates, is adaptive and flexible, and where the teacher is reflective. What is not addressed is the potential internal conflict experienced by the teacher that the use of a curriculum engenders because what also arises in their discourse is the issue of appropriacy of numerous culturally influenced literacies in a context where the use of only Standard English is sanctioned in recognition of it as the prevalent dominant practice that is sought by institutions beyond our classrooms.

Rogers (2002) presents evidence that supports the assumption that amongst educators, and more specifically, teachers of adult literacy, there is also engagement in and use of both dominant and vernacular literacy practices inside and beyond their homes but that there is recognition of the appropriateness of the type of literacy employed based upon individualised perceptions of the context and the social conventions expected.

For Appleby and Hamilton (2005), Boyd and co-editors (2004); Hull (2001); Papen (2005); Fowler and Mace (2005); and Quigley (2006), who view adult literacy as a factor of social practice, there is also recognition that social conventions have implications for personal identity, cultural status and power dynamics. And that these constantly shift when we functionally engage in what has been coined as '*Code Switching*', the suggestion being that adults use different social literacy practices to respond to a need to engage with others in comparative and contrasting social situations (Baynham, 1993, pp 294-314).

In accepting that teachers of adult literacy have specific social roles with potentially many loaded dimensions, suggestions arise that there is a willing acceptance to focus on enabling adult learners by firstly '*initiating them into the conventions*' of the dominant social literacy practices that the adult literacy curricula promotes (Papen, 2005, p 129). The ALCC states: '*The standards provide a map of the range of skills and capabilities that adults are expected to need in order to function and progress at work and in society*' (Basic Skills Agency, 2001, p 3). In effect this demonstrates some collusion with the presumption that adults on adult literacy programmes are either unable or not already adequately equipped, in a socially functioning sense, to recognise the difference between the conventions of differing social situations and or to do anything about

changing their own perceptions of social inadequacy.

The strategy includes national standards of adult literacy to ensure consistency, a core curriculum to clarify what teachers should teach to enable learners to reach those standards, a new system of qualifications to measure achievement against the standards (Basic Skills Agency, 2001, p 1)

By implication the teacher's role is to help learners recognise that it is they who must fit into the system in such a way that it is reflected and evidenced in measured national literacy tests that pertain to the identified functional skills. A pre-emptive narrative is presented by Bolhuis and Voeten (2004), who imply that adult learners themselves have perceptions and tacit acceptance of the implications of non compliance. They suggest that the adult learner willingly engages in the classroom learning process motivated of their perceived inadequacies of the social literacy practices they are already familiar with and may use. In essence, readings from the selected texts referred to throughout, suggest that contemporary adult literacy curricula in current use in England, by virtue of being a resulting factor of what was a grandiose narrative for social and economic change, ensures that access to what could be deemed as sanctioned and elitist official knowledge is controlled and given in manageable bits. In turn, the adult learner can be initiated into the written, read and spoken language conventions with predetermined and arguably exaggerated notions of the protracted economic benefits both for the individual and the state that dominant literacy practices bring and with little emphasis on potential cognitive benefits for the individual learner, again the question arises: 'Who is the ALCC really for?'

There is obvious value in being able to employ dominant literacies at will. Papen (2005, p 129) reminds us that in the process of '*pedagogisation (the process of making an everyday activity... the subject of a lesson)*', is that social literacy practices are being stripped of their social and ideological meanings, their purposes therefore becomes: '*neutralised and autonomous to the extent that acquiring them can turn the literacy teaching and learning phenomenon into a meaningless process of learning rules and techniques.*'

In his focus on adult literacy as a language issue, Barton (1994, pp 3-16) acknowledges the presence of a reflective humanistic discourse that firmly installs the recognition that adult learners have managed their lives and have engaged in socially functioning literacies inside and beyond the classroom arena, using aspects of both formally endorsed functional dominant literacies and actively used non formal and functional vernacular literacies. In terms of conclusive thoughts and in the context of our contemporary setting, teachers of adult literacy must then, according to the selected readings cited in Papen (2005, pp 17-20), and as endorsed by Barton & Papen (2005), Hooks (2003) and Mace & Fowler (2005) teach inclusively and value, embrace, incorporate and communicate with what learners already know in order to teach literacy practices that will presumably further enhance their existing cognition and ability to switch or to marry literacy practices as and when the need arises. In recognising that society is never static and is demanding of change this implies that the relationship between the conditions of society and adult literacy are interactive and reciprocal (Rogers, 2002; Barton et al 2004). As a consequence in setting out *what should be taught* (Basic Skills Agency, 2001, p 1), there is a centrally contrived pressure on the adult literacy teacher and the FE college to mirror the consensus that the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) appears deliberately placed to

ensure.

In the context of continuing claim and counter claim regarding the presence of the ALCC there is clearly the need to fill the crevice in knowledge about the experiences of adult literacy teachers working in the FE sector under the auspices of this curriculum. The absence of research in this area is symptomatic of the general feeling of malaise experienced in research for the whole of the post-compulsory sector and is expressed by Jameson and Hillier (2003, p 3) as:

Vastly under researched in comparison with the data potentially available to it, the strengths of the post compulsory sector have sometimes been overlooked and its achievements undervalued... different parts of the sector such as further education colleges... have... been comparatively invisible... This relative position may have resulted, in the past from a lack of funded time for legitimately subsidized research, reflection and publication by its practitioners. It is time to redress this.

This situation leaves practitioner-researchers in a quagmire in research terms. The literature review in this thesis could not include or demonstrate evidence of research pertaining specifically to the experiences of both the novice and the well seasoned adult literacy teacher in FE colleges between 2002 and 2005 to herald the beginning of teaching under the auspices of the ALCC. The National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) for example has produced many reports since the introduction of the Skills for Life Strategy: Some have been written and researched about the New initial teacher education

programmes for teachers of [adult] literacy (Lucas et al, 2004); Progress reports and research reports have been presented about the adult learners (Barton et al, 2004; Atkin et al, 2005, respectively); as well as the contribution of applied linguistics to the teaching and learning of adult literacy (Ivanic and Tseng, 2004); even the linking of literacy and numeracy programmes in developing countries and the UK (Barton and Papen, 2005). The experience of adult literacy teachers in English FE colleges whom are teaching under the auspices of the ALCC, appears to be less of a priority to well known researchers in the field. Therefore within the bounds of this research, I specifically ask for the perspectives of adult literacy teachers in relation to their work with adult learners in the FE context in southwest London, England. I set out the research question below and present a rationale for the focus of my interest in the experiences of adult literacy teachers teaching under the auspices of the ALCC between the years 2002 and 2005.

The Research Question

Many issues have been raised associated with concepts of adult literacy and its teaching in further education colleges. Given my professional context as an adult literacy practitioner-researcher, I have selected from a long list of possibilities to investigate the following question: What is like to be a teacher of adult literacy in a further education (FE) college under the auspices of a national curriculum for adult literacy?

This question has been posed because educational institutions are recognised places of work in which are '*emotional arenas*', in which there is human interaction '*interspersed with concepts of professionalism and personal identity*' and social and relational factors that can be compromised

by the introduction of expectations imposed by policies and decisions that call for a change in teachers' behaviour, ethos and or culture. And that do not correspond to the opinions or conceptions of teachers with respect to what constitutes good teaching. Teachers do develop and cling to certain beliefs, attitudes and emotions in response to policy developments and create their own meaning as to what has happened or is happening in the work place particularly when their involvement in the development and implementation of the learning curricula is minimal or totally absent. The meanings that teachers develop with regard to their own understanding and experience and the collective experience, can be as a result of several factors that relate to individual perceptions of '*how tasks relating to the ideological content within policy statements were defined and also how the implementation process was managed within the institution*'. In order to extrapolate the essence of what teachers who teach adult literacy experience and describe this content, as a researcher I must first identify what it is that teachers mean in relation to their experiences and the significance of this meaning for them in their place of work (van den Berg, 2002, pp 577-578). .

The purpose of this study was to research the phenomenon of teacher meaning by obtaining from teachers verbal descriptions about their experiences in terms of their relationship with the ALCC and make legitimate their understanding of the whole experience. The essential structure or essence and how it was experienced of the experiences of teachers was extrapolated by phenomenological analysis.

Chapter Three

Phenomenology as Research Methodology and Philosophy

Introduction

In this section of this study I outline a justification for the research question I want this study to answer. I then discuss and attempt to clearly state my own understanding of what a phenomenological enquiry is. As a basis for the discussion for this I have used the literature of those authors who through their expression of what phenomenology is, have inspired me to use phenomenology as a qualitative research paradigm for this study. I frame their contributions within my own understanding of phenomenology as both a methodology to conduct research and as a philosophy with particular perspectives that underpin the concepts of rationality and intentional thought. According to Creswell (1998, p 65) a phenomenological approach to investigating the meaning of lived experiences remains apart from:

Exploring the life of an individual (Biography)... developing a theory grounded in data from the field (Grounded Theory)... describing and interpreting a cultural and social group (Ethnography) or developing an in depth analysis of a single case or multiple cases (Case Study).

This is precisely because phenomenology focuses on the not necessarily singular crux of the quality of the human experience and the only qualitative methodology that directly asks the research participants or co-researchers, *'What is it like for you'* or *how was it for you?*' In that way phenomenology is about *understanding the essence of experience about a phenomenon*.

Justification for the research question:

The professional identity of the teacher is defined by an ability to be responsive and to effect change when teaching behaviour and sense of moral obligation is challenged by policy change.

The subsequent implementation of policy as such becomes *'a largely underexposed domain of conflict'* According to van den Berg (2002, p 577): *'expectations imposed by policies... often have a strongly conflicting effect. The personal identity of the teacher is... frequently at issue'*

Emotions shape the personal identity which in turn helps create the professional identity and subsequently the inclination to change as new teaching and learning policies emerge.

The intention of this study is not just to acknowledge that issues of conflict may exist in the qualities of the professional experience for adult literacy teachers. There is an intention to recognise that teachers are essentially, critical educators; a term which conceptually combines humanism in education (Quigley, 2006) with Freire's (1974) concepts of critical literacy. According to Bathmaker and Avis (2005a, p 7) critical educators *'are concerned with transforming teaching and learning,'* to the extent that student affirmation is not impeded by policy induced teaching practices. Here the critical educator naturally reflects within their own professional context: they examine their role here; question the structural values and beliefs; and

are able to rationalise about actual practice in the face of challenges created by institutional and central adult literacy policy. By inference, this influences teacher perceptions expressed within their own vocalisations of what it is to teach literacy to adults. It is in this respect that this study is approached and is based upon the lived and shared experiences of practicing teachers in a FE college in London, England who have engaged in the process of delivering adult literacy.

This study also acknowledges that at the time of writing the position of the co-researchers in relation to how they experience teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC in 2005 when the interviews were conducted may have changed. This study captures the perceptions of teachers as they were then using phenomenology as both a research methodology and as a philosophy.

What is phenomenology?

Phenomenology is a philosophical perspective as well as a method of research enquiry and as a method its foundations lay within a qualitative framework. As a term, phenomenology literally translates into '*the description or study of appearances*' (Bothamley, 1993, p 408). It is a process of enquiry in which any detailed study of a phenomenon can be called a phenomenology but it should include a description of a series of acts and procedures that must be carried out to satisfy the need to produce an '*organised, disciplined and systematic study*' (Moustakas, 1994, p 103). Phenomenology is also a process of reflection where the researcher attempts to get to the meaning of and to describe a phenomenon in the manner it appears to the person that experiences it. In order to generate a description in the phenomenological context the researcher must apparently avoid all preconceived histories, beliefs, thoughts and ideas about the phenomenon

and therefore '*rejecting the domination of enquiry by externally imposed methods*' (Moran, 2000, p 6). When appropriately described, the phenomenon acknowledges that it presents itself as an experience of '*engaging directly with the world as it is seen, felt or heard.*' This reinforces the belief that any philosophical account of knowledge has to remain faithful to the evidence and phenomenology as such '*must pay close attention to the nature of consciousness as actually experienced... must carefully describe things as they appear*' This is in the context of the open and reflective mind that the researcher is expected to display in the demonstration of the reflection of the description that she reproduces. Phenomenology must do this in order to recognise that all thought as part of a reflective process adds validity and contributes much to the description of the phenomenon and exists as continuity with and of the researcher's consciousness.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) was one of the founders of modern phenomenology. The suggestion from Sokolowski (2000) and Woodruff Smith & Thomasson (2005), is that phenomenology that follows Husserl's direction (I refer to this as Husserlian phenomenology within this study), has become the study of human experience and of the way things are in relation to the mental processes of both the person who describes their own experience and the researcher who presents, interprets and analyses the description for what it is.

Phenomenology can not only rely on empirical data, fundamentally, it places some emphasis on the researcher's consciousness, an *intentional* self consciousness that will be represented within the described phenomenon that is experienced. The way or how this consciousness is reflected within a description of the phenomenon will probably differ from one person to the next because

consciousness is subjective (Husserl, 1913; Moran & Mooney, 2002; Moran, 2005; Moustakas, 1994; Sokolowski, 2000; van Manen, 1990); hence phenomenological research generates subjective, interpretive uniqueness in perspectives of an experience that is the basis of the enquiry. Essentially, phenomenology becomes a method of enquiry that asks co-researchers: *How was it for you?* This is asked in such a way that allows the co-researcher to reflect, *'unimpeded'* upon their lived experiences of a particular event. The analysis process that follows then supports the researcher to look for themes or *'patterns of commonality'* within what was described and establish meanings and *essences* within the context of the phenomenon experienced.

Phenomenology: methodology and philosophical framework

Phenomenology as a methodology

According to Ricour (1967, pp 176-177) there must be a distinction made between the method and the *'doctrine'* of phenomenology. In terms of researching lived experiences which this study intends, *'the methodological interpretive phenomenology is concerned with the way the question or problem is understood by the researcher.'* The researcher defines phenomenology by locating it within her *'present historical situation'* because modern phenomenological philosophy explicitly addresses epistemology (Sokolowski, 2000, p 7) and within this context the researcher is reassured that where politics and epistemology merge, that this is not accidental in the research process. It is van Manen (2002,) who reminds readers that from a phenomenological point of view, and in the context of research, that there is always a need to question the way people experience the world. This is a thematic process that van Manen (1990, p 5) also explores when he argues that the act of researching is an *'intentional act of attaching to the word and to*

becoming more fully part of it'. Within phenomenology this connection with the world is the basis of the principle of '*intentionality*' which is a retrospective '*consciousness of*' or '*experience of*' the aspect of the world that is in focus and within which there is a conscious relationship that is evident between it and the researcher (Moustakas, 1994, pp 11-16).

Phenomenological methodology is a descriptive process because it wants to show how things appear where the phenomenon generates meaning when interpreted to generate its universal description obtained from the original voiced descriptions of experiences given by co-researchers. This is adjudged by van Manen as: '*common experiences require phenomenological attentiveness*' because they are '*ordinary and unremarkable*' and that it is only the methodological and philosophical use of phenomenology that aims to produce writing that ignites '*a sense of wonder about what is ordinary, and seeing the extraordinary in it*'. But this sense of wonder is only available in the form of '*an invitation*' to the researcher whom has receptiveness to it (van Manen, 2002, p 49).

For Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (1998) and as suggested by Gubrium and Holstein (2003), phenomenology, as opposed to other interpretive qualitative methodology, produces a description of the meaning and essential structure of a lived experience of a phenomenon. It is through processes of reflection and philosophical analysis of themes generated by having a conversation with co-researchers, that the universal description of the lived experiences is established and this is used to understand the common experiences that they, as teachers of adult literacy share under the auspices of the adult literacy curricula current in the FE sector in England since 2002.

The descriptions of what was experienced are captured and are framed in accessible language and then presented in text written to reflect what was described. Within this, is the implication that the essential structures of the '*lived meaning*' that are the descriptive lived experiences, have been derived at through a process of bracketing, otherwise known as a process of reduction. This is a '*technical*' phenomenological device to enable the researcher to come to an understanding of the essences and meanings within, without bias and presupposition. At the same time, recognising that bracketing/ reduction is not necessarily an '*end in itself*' but '*a means to an end... an ambition to make reflection emulate the unreflective consciousness*' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964 as cited by van Manen, 1990, p185).

Phenomenology is in effect the science of phenomena that asks what is the nature or meaning of something and as a consequence: '*it does not produce empirical observations or theoretical observations or accounts; it offers instead accounts of the experience as it is lived and has the ultimate ambition that from individual descriptions, general or universal meaning are derived*' (van Manen, 1990, pp 183-184).; or when put in Husserlian terms: the essences and structures of the experience are consciously achieved. In effect, phenomenology asks directly: *How was it for you?* Not unexpectedly, when the question is posed related to what makes a phenomenon what it is; in the phenomenological response, the phenomenon becomes the interpretation in consciousness of the researcher who records her reflection of the description of the phenomenon as experienced (van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenology as a philosophical framework

In acknowledging the philosophical framework or perspectives of phenomenology and how it delivers human understanding within a desired human context, it is the trajectory that van Manen (2002) presents that provided me with a path to access an understanding of what the philosophical principles of Husserlian phenomenology are.

From a philosophical perspective, it is not at all surprising that wonder is the central methodological feature of phenomenological inquiry, since phenomenology is a philosophical project...wonder is both the condition and the primary principle of phenomenological method...For a phenomenological text to "lead" the way to human understanding it must lead the reader to wonder (van Manen, 2002, p 5)

The philosophical phenomenological perspective previously referred to as doctrine is according to Sokolowski (2000) defined as being other than of the '*natural attitude*' and is the initial intended acceptance and focus we have when we are involved in our own beliefs of or about the thing, situation, fact or object. The natural attitude differs from the phenomenological attitude because the focus here is what '*we have when we reflect upon the natural attitude and all the intentionalities that occur within it*' because intentionality is only retrospectively available to the conscious and open mind (Sokolowski, 2000, p 42)

Intentionality

The Husserlian notion of intentionality as the fundamental structure of consciousness means that

all processes of imagining, perceiving, remembering and doing something, are intentional acts that are deliberate and subjective because '*consciousness is intentional*' (van Manen, 1990, p 181-182). Moran (2000), and Moustakas (1994) insist that Husserlian phenomenology is seen as a kind of rationale for '*introspection*' that according to Moran is part of its appeal as a philosophy especially in '*its attempt to provide rigorous defence of the fundamental and inextricable role of subjectivity and consciousness in all knowledge and in descriptions*'. Husserl's phenomenology attempts, despite the muddle created by the concept of epoche, to recognise and describe the role of consciousness in the achievement of knowledge. Therefore it is not an emotional comment about the subjective. It is this '*objectivity-for-subjectivity*' and vice versa that proclaims to be phenomenology's main contribution to contemporary philosophy (Moran, 2000, p 15).

Epoche

The methodology of the phenomenological model becomes extremely blurred with its philosophical perspective right at the beginning of the research process. The phenomenological [Husserlian] model that Moustakas (1994) presents as the first process of the methodology and reduction is that of achieving *epoche* which is described as the setting aside of prejudgments and opening the research interview with an unbiased, receptive persona so that the atmosphere and rapport created are conducive to interviewing with an openness that is honest and very evident. When first read, the phenomenological *epoche* or '*suspension*' appears to be an inaccessible framework and philosophical plateau to reach because it becomes the ability to set aside presuppositions, predilections, prejudices, predispositions and all thoughts associated with the phenomenon and allowing it, them, those or the happening, access into the researcher's

consciousness. For her to *'look and see them again and again, each time, seeing is as if for the first time'* (Moustakas, 1994, pp 85 - 90). This is asking the researcher to believe that their consciousness derived from this act can be somehow detached. Moustakas (ibid) acknowledges the difficulties associated with this task whereas Sokolowski (2000, p 63) presents epoche as if a mere process of formality, a *'neutralisation'* of natural intentions which occurs naturally when she, as researcher, considers the methodological process for completing her phenomenological research.

Moustakas (1994) reflects upon the challenges of practicing epoche and lends some support to the researcher who is about to willingly embark on the epoche journey to describe the essence of another's or their own lived experience. His use of a capital 'E' at the start of the word each time it is written in his text is also perhaps an indication of the importance of achieving this state in the phenomenological process of reductive reflection (*'reflection for reduction'* and *'reduction for reflection'*). And it is here that Moustakas (1994) captures this process poetically and presents it thus:

an ability to look at something with concentrated and unwavering attention, in a way that requires patience, and a will to enter and stay with whatever it is that interferes with the consciousness, until it is removed and an inward clearing is achieved (p 89)

For Moustakas the process has *'another dimension that encourages... a receptiveness'* which reputed to allow *'preconceptions and the prejudgments to enter... consciousness and leave*

freely'. Within that he acknowledges this as a '*meditative procedure which is repeated*' until the researcher experiences '*an internal sense of closure*' but that this '*is rarely ever perfectly achieved*' (Moustakas, 1994, pp 88-90). And how does she know when she has achieved it?

Weakness: the impact of epoche

The phenomenology of Husserl calls for the researcher to locate herself within the research. In order to do this she must go through a reduction process that involves her suspending her own biases and presumptions and achieving an openness of mind. Only when she achieves this condition is she said to have achieved epoche; that is, she has created for herself a condition '*where there is no room for consent approval or open disagreement*' (Moustakas, 1994, p 91). The aim of the research therefore becomes a process to obtain objective insights from the information that is contained within the description of the lived experiences. The claim by Husserl is that by suspending her biases and assumptions, the researcher's consciousness is focused only on the information before her. Then in the analysis of the collected data (the descriptions of the experiences) the researcher can evidence an objectivity that will validate the research and its findings.

Difficulties regarding how epoche is to be achieved arise because text about phenomenological investigations do not appear to guide the researcher on how epoche is to be achieved but denote only that it should be achieved in order to carry out the phenomenological research. The absence of a procedural method for reaching the state of epoche suggests that those who have previously carried out and or wrote about phenomenological studies based upon Husserl's philosophy mention but omit a vital methodological component that supports the validation and reliability of

both the method, philosophy and the findings according to the theory presented (Arp, 2004; Costelloe, 2003). To the cynical this could suggest that the absence of information that describes how epoche is achieved in the real world of research, renders its existence to the realms of a collective idealism or an extraordinarily exclusive psychological feat. To this end Arp (2004, p 168) alludes:

The phenomenologist, having performed the transcendental epoche, is in a position not unlike that of the freed person in Plato's cave analogy who has bathed in the sunlight and now must communicate this enlightenment to the enslaved individuals deep down in the recesses of the cavern. The question remains, 'is it possible for the enlightened phenomenologist to communicate with the unenlightened scientist?'

Husserl offers little or no restitution of the credibility of epoche within phenomenological research when he presents phenomenology as a science that is described as:

a science infinitely removed from psychology as the empirical science of the mental attributes and states of animal realities... phenomenology alone offers us all the necessary conditions for a finally satisfactory establishment of the totality of basic distinctions and insights (Husserl, 1913, translated by Findlay 1970, p 9).

This removes epoche and the consciousness of a description of the lived experience, from being

a seemingly idealistic psychological feat, as it initially appears, to being a more complex mixture of empiricism and idealism (Arp, 2004), where the research study becomes more than just about externally placed phenomena and more about its intrinsic value to the consciousness of the researcher once she has realised the requirement that presumption and bias are set aside (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). According to van Manen (1990, p 23) a paradox exists within a phenomenological study:

phenomenology consists of mediating in a personal way the antinomy of being interested in concreteness in difference and what is unique; and universality or difference that makes a difference .

But how does the researcher reconcile the uniqueness of the phenomenon in question by bracketing prejudgments, biases and historical relationships with it? A contradiction exists here in relation to what the phenomenological attitude is when it incorporates epoche. Despite the fact that both Merleau-Ponty and van Manen supersede Husserl in phenomenological thought, their input offers no practicable insight into how the researcher is to ‘gaze’ at what the phenomenon really is within the researcher’s own open and conscious mind. It could be argued that the mere fact that a phenomenon is drawn to the researcher’s consciousness means that an intrinsic value has been assigned and a conscious relationship has been established whether or not it has been consciously acknowledged. How then does she dissociate from her own consciousness of a phenomenon when an intrinsic value has already been assigned? This doubt is supported by the assertion that qualitative research draws upon the personal history of the researcher and whatever her life story is and the assumptions or beliefs that have been generated within that life story;

couple this with the axiological philosophical assumption in qualitative research which asks, what is the role of values? (Arp, 2004). In response to this question, Creswell argues that the - *'Researcher acknowledges that research is value laden and that biases are present'* (Creswell, 1998, p 75). Even the epistemological assumption of the qualitative research questions the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon being researched and is characterised by the researcher actively trying to lessen the distance between herself and what is being researched. Superficially, this does not appear to embellish Husserl's philosophy; however some clarification can be gleaned when interpretation of Husserl's presentation of epoche in phenomenological reduction is viewed from the deliberately (?) vague interpretive inquiry perspective of van Manen.

A peculiar change takes place in the person who starts to write and enters the text: the self retreats or steps back as it were, without completely stepping out of its social, historical, biographical being...one traverses a world that is not one's own. Here everything is undetermined
(van Manen, 2002, p 2)

van Manen distinguishes consciousness into two categories, namely, the *'natural attitude'* and the *'phenomenological attitude'*: here van Manen states that the non-thematic, non-reflective type of consciousness (*'the natural attitude'*) relates to acts that we carry out in our daily lives (*'acts of being'*); whereas in phenomenology he distinguishes a reflective consciousness (*'the phenomenological attitude'*) which is fed by the consciousness seen when in the natural attitude with which it contrasts. Consequently, reflection and thus epoche go beyond being conscious of

a phenomenon to being the re-achievement and articulation of a '*direct and primitive*' contact with a phenomenon seen in new light.

The suggestion is that the phenomenological attitude will be achieved naturally within the consciousness of the researcher despite the fact that she will not recognise that it has happened until after the fact and will be without specific redress to particular psycho-methodological behaviours. It will be reflected in her synthesis, that is, her application of philosophical perspectives (*imaginative variation*) in the description of how the experience of the phenomenon came to be what it was. She becomes absorbed into the process of analytical reflection of the experience of the phenomenon. Although, if the researcher becomes conscious that she is in the phenomenological attitude this could theoretically or presumably initiate a reversion back to the natural attitude. (Arp, 2004; Costelloe, 2003; Giorgi, 2002; LeVasseur, 2003). The reflective consciousness is the phenomenological attitude and according to Sokolowski (2000, p 47) it is an '*all or nothing... shift in consciousness that disengages completely from the natural attitude and then focuses in a reflective way on the natural attitude*'. But analytical or critical reflection only offers support to what remains a subjective interpretation on the part of the researcher regardless of what is said to promote objectivity.

An explanation of the difference between the natural attitude and the phenomenological attitude given by van Manen (2002) does signify why phenomenological research can not be considered empirical. The consensus is that this is because as a methodology it is not based on, concerned with or verifiable by observation or experience by themselves; instead phenomenological reduction according to Husserl is accessible only by a process of reflection and specifically

reflective reduction and results in the phenomenological attitude and achievement of the description of the *meaning* and *essences* of the experience of the phenomenon in a given time and space.

We must practise reflection, that is make these acts themselves, and their immanent meaning-content, our objects... we must deal with them in new acts of intuition and thinking, we must analyse and describe them in their essence... here we must have a direction of thought running counter to deeply engrained habits which have steadily strengthened... hence the... tendency to slip out of a phenomenological thought stance (Husserl, 1913, translated by Findlay, 1970, p 90)

In effect, phenomenological thought is acknowledged as being about a subjective state when she, the researcher, reflects upon the phenomenon in her interpretation and description of what was experienced and how it was experienced which results from a reflective philosophical synthesis of the components of the lived experience of the phenomenon as described by the co-researcher. This requires acts of judgment but somewhere before this judgment takes place, epoche is achieved when the researcher looks at the description of the experience for what it is in her reduction of the description of the experience as it relates to the phenomenon only when *'reduction for reflection'* and or *'reflection for reduction'* (Moustakas, 1994, pp 90 - 101)

Analytical reflection starts from our experience of the world and goes back to the subject as to a condition of possibility distinct from that experience, revealing the all embracing synthesis as that without which

there would be no world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p X)

That is, in practicable research terms, *epoche* must become redefined or at least should be thought of a process of method, specifically a rendition of phenomenological reduction methodology as opposed to a state of bias and presupposition suspension in the researcher's *open* mind. Reduction takes place before synthesis can. Therefore the phenomenological attitude and thus *epoche* comes into being at the time that *reduction for reflection* or *reflection for reduction* is taking place.

Phenomenological process and integration

Whether *epoche* is written with a capital letter at the start or not, there is general acceptance and acknowledgement that *epoche* is the first stage of both the method and the philosophical aspects of the phenomenological transcendental reduction process. The consensus is that *epoche* enables the researcher, the philosopher, in the phenomenological attitude to *bracket* off the world, and focus the conscious mind on the essential nature of the content of the lived experience of the phenomenon resulting from *eidetic* reduction or the ability to reproduce the quality of the experience with a sharp vividness and exposing its components that made the lived experience what it was (Arp, 2004; Costelloe, 2003; Giorgi, 20002; Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; Sokolowski, 2000; van Manen, 1990)

Understanding and defining the concept of *epoche*, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and synthesis too, are vital to take part in the philosophical dimensions of what is a phenomenological study; phenomenological reduction in the context of this study, becomes as a

matter of consequence, defined as the layered process of reflection that supports the researcher to strip away the conceptions and themes which crowd a phenomenon that is in her view. Imaginative variation becomes the enabler that supports the researcher to develop structural themes from textural descriptions obtained through phenomenological reduction; effecting the realization that there are not singular avenues to truth but the desired outcome is the structural description of the phenomenon in her view and is seen for what it is at that particular time (Moustakas, 1994). With the textural descriptions from the phenomenological reduction process and the structural descriptions from imaginative variation, the final step is their integration or synthesis which culminates into a representation of:

The essences at a particular time and place from a vantage point of the individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study (Mousakas, 1994, p 100).

The essence of the experience in the Husserlian sense becomes that which makes a thing what it is and the final facilitated outcome is the interpretive-subjective meaning of people and their experiences.

Readers are reminded by van Manen (2002, p 85) that the writings that are produced as a result of phenomenological process do not produce absolute truths and that at best the researcher gains ‘*an occasional glimpse of the meaning of human existence*’. But meaning can be ambiguous because it was derived at subjectively. The entire focus, therefore, for the researcher should be on the ‘*uniqueness*’ of the phenomenon; and within that she is warned that ‘*no insight is without*

challenge.

The Phenomenological Process

Context

The context for this phenomenological study is a teaching department within a further education college set in south west London, where lecturers teaching adult literacy were asked to evidence their use of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) in their delivery of literacy to their students and in diagnostic and subsequent academic assessments. The teaching department offered literacy to adult learners as part of a variety of discrete courses and outreach learning programmes. Both the co-researchers and I, the researcher, taught adult literacy within this professional context.

Sample

The five people that represent the research sample were from a population of experienced adult literacy lecturers who taught adult literacy in the context described above. The sample (*co-researchers*) consisted of five lecturers known interchangeably as teachers of adult literacy.

Ethical Considerations

The informed participation of the co-researchers had been sought and agreed with the understanding that the anonymity of the all co-researchers would be preserved. Pseudonyms were assigned and co-researchers could withdraw from participating in the research interview (conversation) at any time they wished. All audiocassette recorded conversations took place only within the knowledge of the individual co-researcher and all audio recordings were taken to my

home address where they were transferred to compact disc (CD), transcribed and kept in a secure place. All pen portraits of individual co-researchers were agreed at first draft stage and did not allude to any characteristics of the individual that would lead to their identification.

Interview Question

Each co-researcher gave a description of their experience in response to the following planned question: What is it like to be a teacher of adult literacy in a further education college teaching under the auspices of a national curriculum for adult literacy?

Interview process

The interviews were conducted on a semi-structured scheduled format. One planned question (stated above) was asked of the co-researchers to initiate an oral response in the form of a description of their lived professional experience. This generated a conversation between researcher and co-researcher; further unscheduled questions may have been asked of co-researchers as part of the interview as and when the initial oral response to the scheduled interview question warranted it.

The interviews, known interchangeably as the conversations, were conducted in the privacy of a departmental staff room or a classroom that was free of obvious distractions and were housed in the familiar environment of the college building. The description of their professional experience given by each co-researcher (referred to as data) was used for analysis. The phenomenological analysis of the content of the descriptions of each co-researcher's response to the interview question was acquired through the collection and analysis of the data as described below.

Data collection, organisation and analysis

The data collected was in the form of a conversation that had occurred between the individual co-researcher and I, the researcher. The conversations were recorded onto an audiocassette tape and then transferred onto a CD (compact disc) from which the audible speech was transcribed verbatim to a Word document in my personal computer. These conversations were recorded verbatim in tables labelled Table 1. The first stage of the reduction process was then entered into and this required that the transcribed and verbatim spoken words of the co-researchers were subjected to a method of phenomenological data organisation and ultimately an analysis based upon a research methodology used by 'Stevick, Colaizzi & Keen' that had been modified and presented by Moustakas (1994, pp 121).

A second method of organizing and analysing phenomenological data is derived from my modification of methods of analysis suggested by Stevick (1971), Colaizzi (1973) and Keen (1975). Each step is presented in the appropriate order of analysis.

As the researcher I subjected the collected data to the reduction processes organised below in chronological steps labelled i-vii.

- i. From the transcription of each co-researcher, significant statements related to the research question asked were extracted and listed, and were recorded in tables labelled Table 2.
- ii. The reduction process continued whereby the non-repetitive and non-overlapping,

statements (*'horizons or meaning units'*) made by each co-researcher relating to phenomenon were individually isolated and were recorded in tables labelled Table 3 for each co-researcher.

- iii. Further reduction continued when the horizons reduced for each co-researcher were clustered into three varying and individual central themes which are presented in tables labelled Table 4 for each co-researcher.
- iv. Horizons, themes and verbatim examples were placed into a general description of the experience or *'textures of the experiences'* for each co-researcher and represent the final stage of phenomenological reduction but not the final stage of the phenomenological process. Textures of the experiences are recorded in tables labelled Table 5 for each co-researcher .
- v. Through approaching the phenomenon from differing philosophical perspectives (*'Imaginative Variation'*), a description of how the phenomenon was individually experienced (or *'structures of the experiences'*) was derived at for each co-researcher and recorded in tables labelled Table 6. This part of the phenomenological process involves conscious acts of thinking and judging, imagining and recollecting so that I, as the researcher, arrive at a core structural meaning. The structures, or the *'how'* illuminates the *'what'*, of the textures, and are inherent within the structures of the experience recorded for each co-researcher.
- vi. The penultimate part of the phenomenological process for each co-researcher was for me, as researcher to construct a synthesis or unifying meaning of their individual experience or the *'textual-structural description of the meaning and essence of the experience'* as it was individually experienced and these are recorded in tables labelled

Table 7, and for validation and reliability, compared with the original transcription for each co-researcher.

- vii. The final part of the phenomenological process was the integration or synthesis of all the textual-structural descriptions to form a universal description of the experience which is representative of the co-researchers as a whole. This information was recorded in Table X.

Justification for the data organisation and analysis

The use of the modified Stevick - Colaizzi - Keen methodology as developed by Moustakas (1994, PP 121-122) signifies my belief as the researcher that this phenomenological analytical approach reflects the depth of analysis required to find essences and meaning and generate the universal description conveyed in the telling of the lived human experience in response to the question: what is it like for you?

Teacher meaning has been sought through research studies that pursued an existential phenomenological approach which when applied philosophically starts with the essential premise that *'to be human... is to exist'* Research studies that address teacher meaning in educational practice, have, according to van den Berg, focussed on the psychological components of the role of emotions in organisations but that there is now a call for teacher meaning to demonstrate a shift in focus *'from the emotional to the social and relational factors'* that occur in the contexts of educational practices. The phenomenological approach primarily aims to understand empirical matters from the perspectives of the humans being studied. The approach acknowledges that the

lived human experience is more than a description of a human's existence and as a result the description becomes '*more of a portrayal*' of the lived experience that is interplayed with both active and passive social and relational factors seen through the '*transcendental methodological lens*' of the phenomenological researcher (van den Berg, 2002, pp 577 - 583).

The apparent absence of phenomenological studies that address teacher meaning other than from an existentialist stance means that this study asks the question: What is it like to be a teacher of adult literacy in a further education (FE) college under the auspices of a national curriculum for adult literacy? This was done in a methodologically similar way to the question of what is the lived experience of spontaneous altruism like? This was posed by Mastain (2006, pp 25 -52). Mastain's phenomenological study focussed on the descriptions given by three (3) participants and generated fifteen (15) constituent themes that detailed the complex, psychological, emotional and mental processes that worked together with the possible influence of factors such as love, spirituality, ego-autonomy and creativity, and their role in the experience as reflected by the universal description of spontaneous altruism. In posing the question: *How was it for you* or *What is it like for you?* Day (2004, pp 27 - 62) asks this in relation to the condition of bulimia, and what is it like as a childhood experience. Day, within her phenomenological study concluded that although the descriptions separately given by the three (3) individual research participants varied, six constituent themes emerged and interacted with each other and that the experience of childhood bulimia as a universal experience described a wanting to have control in an aspect of an own life in social and relational interplay where universally little or no control was experienced. Similarly, Clegg (2006, pp 53 -83) asks what the experience of not belonging is like. Clegg's study employed the descriptions of experiences given by eight (8) research

participants. The study generated many themes from the descriptions of the experiences but two (2) themes reportedly stood out and served as the basis of essence and meaning within the universal description produced from the study's data; namely: isolated belonging (*'many interpersonal distant relationships'*) and consistent, generalised not belonging (*'where not belonging is the primary mode of interpersonal relationships'*) within social relationships.

The studies highlighted above demonstrate the validity and reliability of employing phenomenology because, as a methodology it addresses the research question from a philosophical stance as opposed to any other mode of qualitative enquiry. Phenomenology answers the fundamental question *'How was it for you?'* From the perspectives of those that lived the experience and it creates avenues to identify the other themes that exist within the lived experiences. The aim of the research is to generate and analyse themes within the context and to develop the essence of the structure of the lived human experience to ultimately describe its meaning in the context of the universal description this type of analysis creates.

Chapter Four

Presentation of Data

Introduction

In this chapter the data collected are presented and analysed as discussed in Chapter Three. The data consists of the verbatim recorded interview or conversation between the first co-researcher 'Enid' and I, as researcher. The content of this conversation is recorded within Table 1. The reductive process of this data are chronologically presented in the following tables: Table 2 contains a record of significant statements made by the co-researcher and is taken from the written recorded conversation; Table 3 houses the non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements that are the *meaning units or horizons* pertaining to Enid's experience; Table 4 shows the related and clustered horizons within *themes* generated from Enid's experience and Table 5 demonstrates the synthesis of the horizons or meaning units into a *description of the texture* of Enid's experience. The remaining tables demonstrate specifically, the phenomenological process as part of the analysis of the data; they are as follows: Table 6, which illustrates the meaning and essences of Enid's experience (*the structure*) by employing *imaginative variation* and Table 7 represents synthesis of both the texture and structure of the individual experience (*textural-structural description*).

This chapter also contains Table X which is the final synthesis that defines the *universal*

essences and meanings of all the co-researcher experiences and is the universal descriptive narrative of the lived human experienced achieved through the use of phenomenological methodology and its philosophical application. The descriptive narrative of Table X answers the research question: What is it like to be a teacher of adult literacy in a further education college under the auspices of a national curriculum for adult literacy? The co-researcher data contained within the tables, but particularly Table X, will be used as the basis of the discussions in later chapters of this study.

The data collected and analysed were extensive. Therefore, in the interests of the readers of this study only the data collected and analysed for the first co-researcher 'Enid' (pseudonym) have been presented in this chapter to illustrate the process of phenomenological analysis used. The data collected and analysed for the experiences of the other four (4) co-researchers are presented in Appendices as follows: Appendix B, co-researcher Janice; Appendix C, co-researcher Sean,; Appendix D, co-researcher Jasmine; and Appendix E, co-researcher Zandi. The data have been segregated in this way so that readers can more easily access the content of each conversation and examine them for accuracy in relation to the reductive and phenomenological processes applied in the analysis. As with co-researcher Enid, a pen-portrait precedes the data presented for the other four co-researchers.

Co-researcher 1: Enid

Pen-portrait of the co-researcher:

Enid is a forty-something year old woman of Dominican descent, born and educated in the UK.

She is a main-grade college lecturer who has taught adult literacy for several years within an embedded context. All her teaching experience has been in a further education college and set in south west London. Enid teaches literacy to adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, in a department that caters specifically for their learning needs. She demonstrates a particular talent of producing differentiated teaching and learning resources to accommodate the learning needs of her students. Enid, who is dyslexic, taught literacy prior to the introduction of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, and as a result underwent a process of having to address the expectations that the curriculum’s agenda brought with it. Enid and I have worked together for four years.

Table 1 below shows the verbatim transcript of a conversation that took place between the researcher [sic] and co-researcher in response to the research question being asked of the co-researcher referred to as Enid. It is a full, complete and accurate account of a twenty minute interview conducted in the staff room of the further education institute where Enid is employed.

S = Sophia [researcher]
 E = Enid [co-researcher]

S	Describe for me your experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the Adult literacy Core Curriculum
E	I think it would have been um, more productive to give, to give us a bit more guidance really to what we get. It would benefit the whole department within the next three to four years if we had a bit more structure.
S	[Silence]
E	What?
S	I just wanted to ask you really, do you think the Core Curriculum provides the structure?

E	It does in some ways. I mean, I think, I think, thank God, that we put the curriculum indicators in the right place don't we? We know how to do that, um, indicators in the right place! We've learnt to do that! And we've had loads of experience of using it that way. I wouldn't say we've learnt to use it across the timetable, would you? There is an assumption that we know how to use it, but we don't [pause] we don't! And I think for myself anyway; my observation, is that once you've done the curriculum indicators, if you've done any of them for literacy, you've got to look them up in the book because we haven't had the training to do so. You haven't been shown what to do, that's gone by-the-by and plus if they specifically want us to look at that then they should give us specific training in that.
S	Did you take part in those three day events that we had?
E	[Silence]
S	There were some three day training events that we had in 2002.
E	Probably not. Not with all that stuff that was going on at the time.
S	Oh yeah. Because you...?
E	They wouldn't let me in-it. They didn't invite me. I wasn't invited. I wouldn't have got the opportunity to do that anyway [long pause] having said that though, um, because of my experience, I've worked before with literacy, um, I know it's common sense really because I haven't had the training but I've developed and because I have carried the students through and taken them on to the next stage, hopefully. Again without training, it's common sense. So for example, um, Tina is um. She will write now. I've really encouraged her because I've found that maybe I've got the right equipment to make life as easy as possible and I found different ways to help her feel more comfortable, if you like. Um, I would take that on to the next stage of the curriculum for next year. And in terms of Agnes, um, I've really come along way with Agnes, I give Agnes verbal encouragement and helping Agnes to find different ways to move her on before you even start literacy and learning to help Agnes move on to the next stage and again that's what it's all about [long pause] it's like going back to basics with Agnes.
S	What about using the Core Curriculum, do you find it accessible?
E	Yeah, I think it's accessible. It's not inaccessible. One thing I've been able to access it for properly is the different methods in it. They're accessible, um, but it's time. Time.
S	In terms of?
E	Incredibly accessible. I think the one thing that has helped me is to find a way to cut through the paper work because not all of it is needed, um, um [silence]
S	Within it there are some strategies, um, teaching strategies. Have you ever used any of these?
E	I have looked at that but I haven't used it as much as I should have done. No. oh! I have used it! I find it helpful but I don't use it much, but it is helpful.
S	Helpful?
E	Yeah., especially when you're stuck
S	Stuck?
E	For ideas about what to teach.

Table 1: Verbatim recording of the conversation given by the co-researcher Enid

The experience of teaching adult literacy for Enid, under the auspices of the Adult literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) has meant that Enid has had to undergo some change in the way she thinks about and practices teaching adult literacy and that this experience is characterised by her charge of a lack of guidance. The lack of guidance is, as Enid perceives it, a collective experience: *'I think it would be more... productive to give... us a bit more guidance...'* Not having the guidance has created a perception that how the curriculum is accessed is in a way that is less structured than its potential indicates to her that it should be. The reality of Enid's experience of using the curriculum is that despite not having the training to do so, she uses it in a limited way and is able to find it accessible but that its time that acts as the main constraint and as a constraint it prevents her from extrapolating from the curriculum, meaningful structured factors that could potentially be applied in her teaching. *'... I think it's accessible. It's not inaccessible. One thing I've been able to access it for properly is the different methods in it. They're accessible, um, but it's time. Time.'* But time constraints have not prevented Enid from gleaning from the curriculum what she can; she uses it and finds it *'... helpful...'*

Enid is self assured about her abilities to teach adult literacy despite wanting more guidance about the use of the ALCC. She has worked before with literacy and presents that her approach to it is *'... common sense really'*. Despite the presence of the curriculum, Enid has grown with her experience of teaching adult literacy and contends that *'I've developed...'* which comes from notions of accomplishment in having *'... carried the students through and taken them to the next stage'*. Enid's experience of teaching adult literacy has been empowering, both for her and her students; for Enid there is a resoluteness in her recognition that she is equipped and ready to support students to learn without obvious constraint *'... maybe I've got the right equipment to make life as easy as possible...'* a confident positioning in terms of how much her own skills have contributed to having found *'... different ways to help...'* that creates an atmosphere in which students are made to *'... feel more comfortable, if you like'*. This is a situation which Enid's experience of teaching adult literacy despite the auspices of the curriculum is still under her control and is measured by her students getting to the not inaccessible *'... next stage...'*

Table 5: The texture of Enid's experience: Synthesis of the invariant meaning units

Table 6 shows a description of how the phenomenon was experienced or the structures of the experience as described by the co-researcher Enid. The structural description was arrived at though the employment of a perspectivism or imaginative variation called for in the phenomenological investigations. It creates the meanings and essences that are my interpretations, as the researcher, of how Enid's experience of the phenomenon came to be what it was, as described in the textural description (Table 5). The journey is pronounced by

original description of the lived human experience as given by Enid and as represented verbatim in Table 1.

For Enid, the understanding that she has of the vernacular used by the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum has not been validated although she does find it accessible. She has been left with the sensation of what it feels like to know that a behaviour change is expected with regards to her teaching but having no idea what that change is, this unsettles her; as a result, the manifested certainty and control that Enid expects to have in the context of the ALCC still elude her. But Enid draws comfort from her belief that other adult literacy teachers are in a similar position.

Enid continues to teach adult literacy and gets desirable student outcomes. Enid knows her students and she knows what she needs to do to facilitate their learning needs. Several years of experience and the subsequent learning successes have for Enid, been the pivotal affirmation of her own skills and abilities and the source of the assurance that she needs because of, and yet, despite of the presence of the ALCC. The sense of certainty and control that the successes in Enid's teaching affirm for her, are what she retreats to and flags up in the context and threat of the ALCC. It is the only semblance of power and ownership that she has in her relationship with it.

Table 7: Textural-structural description of the essences of Enid's experience

The analysis within phenomenological methodology is initially a reductive process that then becomes deductive as demonstrated in the representation of the data presented above for co-researcher Enid. What has been demonstrated for Enid typifies and is representative of an explanation of what has been done to the data of all the co-researchers involved in this study (Appendices: B, C, D and E). The ultimate aim was to arrive at the point in the study where Table X was generated. This was when the content of each Table 7, that is, each textural-structural description had been *synthesised* to create the unifying expression of what the essences and meanings of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) are.

The Narrative of Table X

Introduction

Table X below shows the synthesis of the meaning and essences that have become the descriptive narrative for all the co-researchers that were involved in the development of this study. It effectively represents the definitive universal experience of the co-researchers in relation to the research question that was posed and as a result, has generated a need for a narrative to demonstrate validity and reliability in relation to both its development and its content. This will also support the argument that the reductionism used as part of the process of analysis has increased meaning as opposed to diminishing it in regard to the study as a whole. And, because Table X and all the data presented and constructed before it will form the basis of the discussion chapters that follow this chapter.

Table X

The synthesis of the meanings and essences of each experience of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) were captured in Table 7 that was produced for each of the five co-researchers interviewed. Throughout a reductionism was adopted in line with phenomenological methodology proposed in Chapter Three of this study and in conjunction with the summarised step by step method presented in Appendix A. This synthesis was my final methodological behaviour as researcher in relation to the phenomenological research process. This was where,

The ALCC offered starting points and an accessible plateau of practice for the teaching of adult literacy that act as markers of approved teacher behaviour. It stated its prescription and suggestions for practice loud and clear and the co-researchers embraced what they needed from it regardless of any constraints they may have perceived in its presence. However, co-researcher knowledge of the ALCC was not complete and for some this generated a sense of suspicion about what was perceived as covert or inferred between the lines of its text. Any movement beyond the doubt paradoxically facilitated a retreat back to a place where experience and or a connectedness with the adult students provided the basis for perceptions of meaningful teaching and learning experiences. There was the generation too of an undeniable professional self-esteem strengthened by making student learning need central. It was the response of the adult students that instigated hope, encouragement and affirmation for the co-researcher and when they were called upon to transmit, this is the place where the co-researcher wanted to be. They would not readily surrender this position or compromise it for the sake of an easier teaching life neither did they consciously relinquish their professional integrity as they taught under the ALCC banner. They recognised the importance of their roles as teachers of adults and the social implications this might have beyond their contact and beyond their classrooms. Their aim was not to patronise and proclaim empowerment of students but to construct adult learning experiences that were real and relevant. When seemingly out of reach, the feeling of guilt was obvious but forbearance was displayed; when achieved a definitive joy was expressed or perceived.

For all, the want and need of direction was pivotal in their relationship with the ALCC. For most their pursuance of its charm was cautious yet mostly optimistic. Sometimes they readily followed. Sometimes they entered into a guarded engagement with the curriculum and tip-toed gingerly across the mine-field of intent with the knowledge that there was the potential for students to become entangled within something that was not of their choosing in the process of learning to conform to standardised conventions.

The co-researchers were not empty vessels waiting to be filled. There was a clear sense of self and their self-consciousness helped them to monitor themselves and their impact. For them the mantra of 'real and relevant' for adult student cognition provided the justification to make the decisions they did under the auspices of the ALCC. The co-researchers would not consciously surrender anything that was not theirs to give; rather their learner centeredness actively shielded their adult students in the presence of the ALCC, where only its chosen and desirable bits were allowed to seep into their own and student consciousnesses.

The co-researchers were willing gatekeepers and unequivocally their relationship with the ALCC was still evolving.

Table X: A universal description of teaching adult literacy in a further education college under the auspices of the ALCC.

Chapter Five

Discussion: The co-researchers' data

Introduction

Having collected and analysed the data I will now reposition my findings within the broad literature, the research of others, professional practices, and the within institutional and government policies and procedures covering the emergence of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) in England in 2002. It is my intention that this merger will add validity to my findings and support the theoretical content. It also signals the need to develop future studies because of other questions and limitations that my research and its generalisations in this context have produced. These questions, limitations and generalisations are in terms of the wider social outcomes and implications that are suggested and particularly as they relate to the professional practices of the co-researchers that participated in this study.

Within the literature reviewed I addressed firstly the concept of literacy initially in isolation then as an interpretation of the functionalist perspective in terms of how functionalism as a theory defines literacy. I examine what functional literacy is as proposed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Moser Report which laid the premise for the ALCC emergence. I position the functionalist perspective alongside but not in collusion

with a humanist perspective which is addressed in the literature. This was presented from the text of writers such as O'Neil (1977) who proclaims that the purpose of adult literacy defines different types of functionalism amongst other things. Secondly, the literature addressed what I had entitled 'Cultural Invasion' because this for me aptly describes the emergence of the ALCC when one considers the lack of evidence that suggests that a dialogue took place between adult students, their teachers and those who proposed, constructed and produced the curriculum. I refer back to the emergence of the ALCC in terms of the methodology used as evidence of the need for adult literacy reform within the context of adult Basic Skills reform: evidence emerged from the International adult Literacy Survey (IALS) which was said to have a strong United States (US) bias and be of questionable cultural relevance to OECD states outside of the US where the IALS was applied. Within this discussion as it relates specifically to the experience of the co-researchers, the context of the 'Cultural *Invasion*' changes and the conceptual themes that emerge relate specifically to teaching practices and perspectives of social practice as evidenced in the actual data obtained.

Thirdly, I address some of the issues associated with the potential consequences of change in the English Further Education (FE) context that reflected the situation within the teaching department in the south west London FE context in which my research is set. Potentialities exist not just in terms of what is taught but how adult literacy subject matter is taught particularly in the suggestion that the motivation to learn is being linked specifically with the presence of a curriculum and is perhaps physically and emotionally extrinsic to the adult student. The literature reviewed under the title: '*Plaudits and Prophecy*' that follows is intended to create imagery for the reader that suggests what teaching adult literacy has become and the impact of the ALCC on

teacher professionalism to ensure that the UK central government's aims are achieved in our contemporary context as it existed between November 2002 and July 2005.

The appearance of the ALCC is a relatively new phenomenon although its inception started in the 1990's it did not emerge until the early twenty-first century. I believe that it is as a direct result of this, that I found an absence of phenomenological research studies that are about the ALCC in relation to teacher meaning, that is, the qualities or nature within what they experience and how they experience teaching adult literacy in the presence of the ALCC. Although in Chapter Three of this study I acknowledge the call for teacher meaning by van den Berg (2002) which focuses on the emotions of teachers during various stages of the development of their roles offered via an existentialist study.

Comparing and distinguishing the findings of my research with the literature:

Part 1: Adult Literacy

Adult literacy, within a humanist perspective goes way beyond the premise of an adult's ability to read and write. It is symbolic of complex practises associated with communication determined by context, and by including an approach that aims to allow adult learners to understand: social content, intent, human cognition and their own learning need (Barton, 1994; Bernardo, 1998; Freire, 1973; Howard, 2006; O'Neil, 1977). Since the advent of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) in England, adult literacy has been framed, officially within a functionalist perspective that espouses rhetoric of social inclusion and citizenship participation and becomes

defined as a means to an end where structures are put in place to standardise and promote the development of conventional skills regarding the use of Standard English and its incorporation in adult behaviours to achieve economic and social outcomes desired and engineered by the political systems in place at that time (Papen 2005; OECD, 2003). This is a situation that Hooks (2003) reiterates as the reality of education being used to reinforce the values of those that dominate in western society and that the adult literacy espoused as being functional officially, is according to Merrifield (2006, p 153) *'an expression of power relationships in society'*.

The experiences that my co-researchers describe pinpoint a balance between perspectives: one which openly welcoming the structure that the ALCC's framework has and which fits within how they structure the teaching and learning they seemingly gate keep and also another in which they support adult learners to acquire and learn literacy that allows them to operate in the college environment and within a world outside the institution that is constantly changing both socially and politically. Bird (2002, p 1), *'One year on'* summarises aspects of the experience thus: *'certainly practitioner response to the new infrastructure has generally been very positive regarding the standards, curriculum and supporting materials'*

The following extract is taken from my description of the texture of the experience for co-researcher Sean (Table 5, Appendix C) and his experience of teaching adult literacy to adult learners with mental health problems. The extract is being used to highlight that Sean and other teachers who recognise, and can relate to his description, have used the teaching of adult literacy as a mechanism to support students to develop their existing skills. And that these skills go beyond the confines of the skills for functionalism promoted by the development of specified

(1993) acknowledges and Appleby & Hamilton (2005) sanction, this transforms the teaching of adult literacy to reflect and balance the cultural concerns and social interests of the adult students and creates within classrooms a socio-cultural vernacular and democracy for literacy which is perceived as negotiated, and is taught and learnt whilst defining for itself what it is to be functional.

Balancing the learners' expressed needs, the needs of learners as perceived by the literacy teacher and the elements within the curriculum was experienced as a source of conflict: Hamilton, Hillier & Tett (2006, p 7) argue that:

However subtle and flexibly designed the curriculum is, it cannot transcend this fundamental feature: it is designed for learners rather than with them or by them... To this extent, the more open and humanistic possibilities of a lifelong (and life wide) system of learning opportunities for literacy... are weakened and obscured. For practitioners, the tightly drawn boundaries around their work throw up new tensions as they attempt to deal with the messy reality of diverse learning needs and settings while 'ticking the right boxes'

Co-researcher, Jasmine, teaches adult literacy to a group of adult learners who are all black and do not generally recognise the value of written expression in their own vernacular. The extract below is from the textural description of Jasmine's experience (Table 5, Appendix D) and is used to illustrate the kind of conflict that has arisen where the presence of the conventions that the

education process (Freire, 2004; Hooks, 2003). Here, the easily identifiable *uninitiated*, are inducted into cultural conventions of a grand narrative defined within a non-negotiated pedagogy that is of an adult, prescriptive and functional literacy context (Moser, 1999; OECD, 2003). The conventions were not yet part of the learner's own individual adult identity. As a consequence, adult learners negated their own identity and cultures as inferior in what was apparently supposed to represent an egalitarian mass education system (Freeley, 2005). This is illustrative of the issues that Freire (1973 and 2004) raises in the *education versus massification* reflection; here, central government and policy makers ensure that their cultural perspectives of entitlement define what adult literacy is within the context of the curricula they create to validate their assumptions of what it is to be a functionally literate adult.

Such an entitlement could be interpreted as a commitment to providing wider access to foundation skills for adults who had previously missed out... However, a critical reading of the policy texts, and recent funding priorities, show the strategy rooted more in a response to what is perceived as the skills demands of a knowledge economy for global competitiveness than to issues of social inclusion and increased opportunities for lifelong learning. The result of this may well be the creation of new sites of inequality (Appleby & Bathmaker, 2006, p 703)

In the case of co-researcher Jasmine and her adult learners, they were all convinced that it was they that were inadequate, as opposed to the system that the presence of the ALCC supports.

This is where adult learners act on elements of their own environment and experiences facilitated by the adult literacy teacher; Quigley defines this experience where the self-diagnosis as typified by Zandi was in recognition that maintaining an equitable relationship between herself and her adult students needed negotiation, empathy and action but not necessarily in that order. Co-researchers effectively balanced humanist philosophy with conformity and the curriculum:

In essence we see it as a humanist approach... since each learner's needs have clearly come before the needs of the institution, the teachers or the funding agencies... the key to the humanist approach is not simply a caring teacher but 'self-diagnosis' (Quigley, 2006, p 153)

Part 2: Cultural Invasion

The focus of this section of the literature reviewed served to examine some of the pretext for the development of the ALCC: for example, the absence of evidence of dialogue with those that the ALCC was intended for. These actions were indicative of what Freire (1973) regarded as a symptom of cultural imposition sanctioned by the social elite for the conformist social non-elite without their prior consent. It could be argued, that the democratic processes that my co-researchers spoke of as part of their experience of negotiating the delivery of adult literacy with their students, extrapolates from the notion of a pro-dialogical action theory (Freire, 1973). But the connection is tenuous, since my actual research had not intended to address the historical dialogue as a pretext to the ALCC. Nor did I intend for it to be compared with, and contrasted to that of the experiences of my co-researchers; unless it had arisen within their own citations about their own context of teaching adult literacy. However, for co-researchers Sean and Jasmine their

and were expressed accordingly (Thompson, 2003; Quigley, 2006). In extrapolating this cultural theme, this phenomenological study indicates that for the co-researchers to sanction the dissolution of their partnership with the ALCC, would place them in a situation where they would risk accusations of jeopardising the cultural norms that had been created under the auspices of the ALCC, including funding agreements. More fundamentally, they could be accused of jeopardising not only their teacher-student relationships, but also of impeding apparent student desire to progress cognitively within genERIC and prescriptive literacy skills structures. In denying adult students access to social and power genres in this way, co-researchers would portray a subjective rationale that brings into question their own moral integrity, in light of the prescriptive conditions and systems of accountability that central government and significant others have imposed upon the co-researchers and other teachers of adult literacy since 2002.

Having set its own cultural parameters, central government would be expected to act to scrutinise and call for accountability to ensure that all participants, especially teachers of adult literacy, are encouraged or inadvertently coerced to fulfil their designated roles (Bathwater and Avis, 2005; Papen, 2005). *'Given the level of funding, and the profile of government attention to adult basic skills, it is not surprising that there has been strong monitoring in progress'* (Hillier, 2006, p 60). An assumption that emerges within the meaning and essence of the universal description of the co-researchers' experiences, is that the conscious thought of pejorative behaviours towards cultural parameters set by central government in relation to the presence of the ALCC, would become internally stifled by the co-researcher's own sense of moral and cultural obligation.

Part 3: Change and Consequence

Much of the writing presented in this part of the literature reviewed in relation to the consequences of educational policy change and curriculum reforms within FE institutions were similar, or resonated with the findings within my research.

Bathmaker and Avis (2005) presented that the role of the adult literacy teacher is defined in terms of helping the government see how the introduction and use of a curriculum should be implemented to reduce the emergence of ideological clashes and promote the concepts of consistency, standardisation and generalisation of provision. At the time that the data were collected, mechanisms that invited professional feedback were not evident within the FE college in question. However, the co-researchers did present a general willingness to be in step with some of the prescription of the Core Curriculum, and they were not engaged in an external ideological battleground that was obvious to the researcher. Instead, they focussed their time and energy on actually teaching and facilitating learning. Hamilton and Hillier (2006, p 158) sum this up as:

We have identified spaces that individuals have carved out for themselves, perhaps through additional research or study, taking time to reflect and challenge their daily, taken for granted activities. Networks... have provided opportunities to cross the practice-learner-policy divides... It has been difficult for ALLN practitioners to consolidate their professional expertise and policy involvement

This is illustrated in the universal experience of co-researchers by the following extract taken

difficulty experienced actually was, but does illustrate how she gate-keeps against teaching prescriptive literacy behaviours that would define the literacy facilitated or taught as something other than what it should be for her students. Like the other co-researchers, Zandi is accepting of the challenge not to dismiss all the prescription. She recognises some value in what she can take from the ALCC to transmit to adult learners to achieve the same prescribed learning outcomes, which collectively, teachers used as officially sanctioned markers of learning, and student progress. This indicates that there is some consensus of values with the ALCC in relation to the perceived agreement of what learner outcomes should be. Departmentally, this has altered the teachers' ethos and culture, in that, a common understanding now exists where once the structures used to measure progress were not consistent. Hence, there is a willingness within co-researchers to embrace the structures that mark student progress as promoted by the ALCC. Ironically, it is the common language of the ALCC, in relation to the prescribed skills and knowledge required by learners to achieve contrived standards that dictates some sense of unity amongst the co-researchers in this study. None of the co-researchers indicated that they participated in discussions explicitly concerned with the teaching of adult literacy as a specific subject, therefore, the absence of any agreed teaching policies co-existing with the ALCC was an inevitability. According to van den Berg (2002), this is unremarkable in an environment where the dominant institutional culture is in a state of constant flux; making unity between smaller cultures and individual professional identities more fragmented. When coupled with the fluidity in the definition of what adult literacy is, this has meant for co-researchers that subject matter can not be the main influence on the teaching methods, assumptions and interpretations of the curriculum as Lucas (2004) suggests. What is evident from the data is that learning outcomes prescribed in the ALCC creates the professional bind that also signifies a culture of teacher

Bathmaker and Avis (2005), and Papen (2005) validate this approach of matching desires to possibilities within wider social settings such as within a college as an institution of learning. The authors also advocate that teachers of adult literacy should be making sense of their relationships with their learners in terms of what motivates them to learn and to establish components of teacher efficacy. This was not necessarily the aim of my research. Co-researcher Sean's extract illustrates how he and other co-researchers have mapped out their relationships with students and did respond to perceived and expressed adult learning needs, which prompted some professional affirmation whilst balancing the need to demonstrate a professional relationship with the ALCC. This perhaps helps to pinpoint the new professionalism expected of FE teachers that Lucas (2004) addresses. In the actual professional practice of the co-researchers, this came with an emphasis of involvement that demonstrated both andragogic assumptions and pedagogic assumptions as described and distinguished by Brookfield (1986), Knowles (1980) and Rogers (2002) where learner need, teaching and adult learning effectively dictated the absence of a distinction between facilitation and teaching. This fits well into the concepts of ownership and is indicative of the empathetic response that Quigley (2006) espouses in relation to the responsiveness of the adult literacy teacher.

Martin-Jones and Jones (2000), Papen (2005), and Roberts (2005) for example, advocate that literacy be redefined by its pluralized form literacies in recognition of the complexities that exists in trying to establish a single consensus about what adult literacy is and how it should be defined. This parallels with the experiences of my co-researchers when their experience is that the context in which they present their teaching and facilitation of adult literacy is not static but is context-

could use within the framework that their students could be initiated into for their own perceived or negotiated good.

Chapter Six

Discussion: Implications

Introduction

In this chapter I place the discussion into a broader context and demonstrate the value of the findings of this study in relation to how they have both meaning and implications for policy development and practices within: professional teaching practice; government policy and practice; policy procedures and practices in further education colleges in England and implications for further research. Within the presentation of the implications in relation to policy development I also make recommendations that support the context.

Implications for professional practice

Phenomenological analysis of Teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC in a FE college context in south west London has shown itself to be a deceptively isolating process despite the fact that so many of us do it and despite the fact that an unspoken unifying culture has been identified. This study fundamentally acknowledges that teachers are willing to tell their own professional story as it reflects their own experiences in the field. I have discovered through my findings that teaching adult literacy has become a process that engages natural, mechanised and emotional operations that are performed by teachers in the hope that what comes out the other end are adult students who have developed cognitively and whom themselves can identify

their own progression in relation to shaping a literacy proclivity that is their own and is readily accessible as and when the need to engage arises.

This study has shown that teaching adult literacy has also become a procedure in which the aspirations of central government, policy makers, college managers, adult students and self find a contextual meeting place within the mind of the teacher and battle it out for prominence. The conscious mind of the teacher becomes the point of ideological contiguity. As teachers we make informed judgements about the expressed aspirations and perceived needs of students which should, if the ideal is achievable, intertwine and fuse with our own professional aspirations; together these factors become the consensual driving force that produces desired learning and teaching outcomes. Instead our conscious moral receptors become bombarded by our own perceptions of the types of professional behaviours others, outside of ourselves, instigate or prescribe for. This has manifested the descriptions of teacher meaning and essence after asking co-researchers individually, what is it like for you? And the synthesis of this meaning and essence are, I believe uniquely portrayed in and by this study.

My study emerges with the following implications:

1. That the teacher is encouraged in the use of the ALCC to see strength and glean support in the structural framework it provides. Within that they express their consent of the perceived and symbolic power relationships weighted in favour of the ideology of those who constructed the ALCC suggesting that teachers are persuaded to facilitate access to genres of power for themselves and their students. And that this is perpetuated through the prescription that exists within its accessible structure and resources.

2. That the structure of the ALCC symbolises the social contract that exists between the teacher and the state which persuades and binds the teacher in varying degrees to its content limiting the context of what we are able to teach as adult literacies outside of it.
3. That there is the constant drip of temptation to compromise one's own values for the sake of a work life that is conceptually an easier option. But this is often a matter of scale in how teachers will balance student need and the professional and or moral compromise expected. This finding implies that some correlation exists: personal power within the role of the teacher diminishes as professional integrity is relinquished. There is a power shift from the individual to the contrived social and political action that becomes the pursuit of prescribed functional adult literacy norms. This dimension adds to the sense that a teacher's own humanistic value base could become redundant with increasing consumption of the ALCC's accessible resources.
4. That teacher approach to teaching adult literacy is a series of phases where contradictions can exist and where each phase has its own corral of consciousness: the beginning phase is marked by a need to respond to demands from external relationships; the second phase is dynamic with the intrinsic struggle that ensues when trying to balance values and beliefs which are battling for prominence in the conscious mind; the third phase is the re-alignment of andragogic practices with pedagogic practices; the final phase is the recognition that affirmation comes from facilitating student progression governed by authentic adult student desire within the context of the ALCC.
5. That teacher relationship with the ALCC needs time to develop. That time is a premium commodity in FE constricted by competing demands, confusion, doubt and cynicism.
6. That when confusion and doubt emerge teachers retreat back to familiar tried and tested

practices because inaction is not an apparent option for the co-researcher. Opportunity to retreat implies that the prescription of the ALCC allows some fluidity within the moral obligation and moral responsibility it places on co-researchers to facilitate the student outcomes identified and desired. In effect, the ALCC does not really concern itself with how students get there, (to the outcomes) but compels the teacher that students must get there. By implication, for the teacher to do otherwise would be immoral; for the teacher to do otherwise would be negligent.

The notion of what it is to be functional within functionalism doctrine reveals its real intent which is to represent a single causal framework for a theory of social change. What functionalism does not do is highlight the conflict and coercion it generates to create change (Smith, 1973). It is clear that conflict is a necessary element in the co-researchers' teaching under the auspices of the ALCC. My findings imply that without conflict there would not have been the creativity to retreat back to the familiar and without creativity there may have been a limited movement toward desirable expressed student outcomes.

My findings imply that the dynamics of consensus in the relationships between the co-researchers and the curriculum were all functions of culture, conflict and coercion (3 C's) instigated and perpetuated by the functionalism symbolised by the ALCC. There is a reminder by Smith (1973, pp 2 -7) that functionalism, ignores the processes of the 3 C's and as a result is *'obviously incomplete as a theory of social change'* This presents a significant implication and consideration for wider society which is that the current central UK government used incomplete social theory as a pretext to action and created a pseudo-urgency to evoke socio-political reform

and rhetorical economic societal gains. The suggestion made here is that all theories of social change as with functionalism, need to be understood in each context it is applied. This is so that consequences and alternatives become identifiable and can be attended to as the individual becomes conscious of their own sense of social obligation and professional purpose and is allowed time to contemplate the expectations of the moral duties placed upon them within the structures of prescriptive change that exist there.

Implications for government policy and practices

In instigating socio-political theory in the form of functionalism, central government in the United Kingdom (UK) was also utilitarian in its approach to the curriculum's implementation. This was stated previously within this study in relation to the development of the *Skills for Life* strategy and the resultant Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) which was announced in response for the central need to produce the consequence of functionally literate adults in England. This is within a philosophical context where the central government have distinguished the righteousness of the action of introducing the ALCC, from the moral goodness of the agent that is the adult literacy teacher.

The co-researchers in this study and as with other teachers of adult literacy, became agents of the consequence in that they had been given an unstated social contract with a specific role to play in the reconstruction of societal norms with adult literacy at the forefront of proposed social change. Through the phenomenological research applied in this study, the essence of the experience of the phenomenon is a situation where co-researchers, under the auspices of the ALCC, did not feel adequately grounded to grasp what their whole role consisted of, and what it

was to become in their workplace. If central government strategy is to succeed in the medium and long term, this must be taken account of because the strategy relies heavily on the expectation that teachers will be cooperative, accountable and contribute responsibly.

Governments want to know 'what works', they want results and they want good feedback from the electorate about the impact of policy initiatives... there are opportunities, because LLN has become a major policy priority for the first time since the 19th century. It seems set to stay as a policy commitment... Governments cannot succeed by deciding alone what skills, knowledge and mindsets will support peoples lives. Neither can they make learning happen: it is learner, helped by teachers and trusted others, who learn and practise LLN. They do it best if they can follow their own motivation, pursue their own purposes, supported by policy.

(Howard, 2006, pp 32 - 33)

Within the presentation of the implications, recommendations for teacher friendly policies also emerge.

The following implications emerge from my findings:

1. That tension is created where teachers of adult literacy seek to communicate about their roles under the auspices of the ALCC. Moreover, there is a need for co-researchers to understand their working relationship with the ALCC as it impacts on themselves and their professional relationships with adult learners It is clear that for the co-researchers there was a need for

provision to be made for avenues within which they could safely question central and local policy in relation to the presence of the curriculum and negotiate and seek official validation of their effectiveness as teachers of adult literacy beyond the ability to recognise and tick off functional skills outcome boxes. This finding supports the development of a call for UK central government to have an investment agenda into teacher development with special funding for in-situ support in the form of proper expert mentoring support resources that would incorporate actual and practical subject support for teachers of adult literacy particularly those that are new to teaching.

2. Teachers of adult literacy seek to grasp the mantle of literacy as a concept for social change, and tackle it from a basis that the use of Standard English is not the only literacy practice for adult literacy learners. This finding supports the call for new emphasis to be given to literacy knowledge as social practices and for it to be sanctioned by central government. Central government acknowledgement would be intended to support firstly further education colleges as institutions and then subsequently individual teachers to understand the tensions, reconcile the differences and to code switch as and when, in the teaching and learning of adult literacy from the perspective that literacy should be pluralized to literacies within socio-cultural settings. Subject specific practical support and appropriately resourced training opportunities to extend the development of literacies as social practices are the domain of those that promoted and supported the emergence of the ALCC.
3. That within discrete adult literacy provision, co-researchers see themselves as moral agents who have primary responsibility for the teaching of literacy to adults, and also some responsibility for learner well-being as they transmit and transfer from the ALCC framework. The moral obligation apparent amongst co-researchers has no obvious

boundaries set within a professional context where there appears to be no professional standards within an institution that contains a teaching culture expressed under the auspices of the ALCC. This finding implies that a central government emphasis on a professional standard and a proper professional development framework will support the emergence of boundaries for the teacher's moral umbilical cord between themselves and the adult learners in the teaching process. This will provide sanctioned guidance and professional boundaries whilst reducing the potential of learner dependency.

In researching the experience of adult literacy teachers working under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, this study provides constructive philosophical support for teachers who aspire to have a greater sense of their own effectiveness. Mechanisms of seeking support and affirmation not just in respect of student outcomes but for themselves as educational professionals, creates for teachers of adult literacy, an awareness of their moral responsibility to maximise conditions for their adult students to achieve a sense of personal affirmation and control. This sense of morality should then extend to the role of central government and FE colleges, where they can demonstrate a responsibility to respect, value and make decisions towards creating a safe and productive working environment that facilitates the growth and autonomy of teachers.

Implications for policy and practices in further education (FE) colleges

In the context of the emergence of the ALCC, it has been established that large, inner city, further education (FE) colleges in England, are vectors of social change (Jameson and Hillier,

2003). They are characterised as institutions where the implementation of central government policies are easily instilled because of the promise of attracting funding if demonstrably responsive. In analysis carried out by Lucas (2004) we see that the absence of a sufficiently unifying culture both between the many institutions and within a single institution and its many departments, make colleges particularly vulnerable to change. But FE colleges are first and foremost, institutions of learning; that serve a diverse student body and within this context, trying to be all things to all people in an impoverished social setting. As found in this study, the culture amongst teachers of adult literacy in the same department lacks sufficient cohesion to be recognisable as one teaching culture. This has contributed to the vulnerability of the professional morality of adult literacy teachers to demands placed upon them in a non-static social environment where more could be done to protect their professional integrity and identity. The absence of reference to the role the FE college plays in the use of the curriculum in the experiences of the co-researchers suggests that they did not perceive the college as playing an active role in teacher use of the ALCC except to imply that the institution did not provide adequate training and guidance in its use. As a result the institution becomes a non-innocent bystander in the processes of teaching and learning that emerge during and after curricular implementation. Within the presentation of the implications, recommendations also emerge.

The following implications emerge from my findings:

1. The absence of a completeness in their relationship with the curriculum and the expression of time constraints means for co-researchers that there is room for a recontextualisation. In such a process they would establish their role, and any meanings within it, in relation to both the bigger social picture and the picture within the college, not only as a teacher generally but

more specifically as a teacher of adult literacy. Facilitation would be demonstrable through the presence of subject specific mentoring sessions and strategic partnerships with local universities to support teacher development from expert resources, and through the freeing up of time on teacher timetables by managers, to enable them to participate in ongoing training and research pertaining to adult literacy.

2. That the absence of a shared culture within the department and the expectation but absence of a collective professionalism amongst teachers of adult literacy, in the presence of the ALCC and the wider college curriculum, suggests a fragmentation within college culture and amongst the co-researchers in terms of what was delivered and how the subject was delivered. Agreed standards of professional practice amongst teachers of adult literacy and other specific subjects within the college, potentially generate the formation of professional standards for teachers within the FE context as opposed to occupational standards being imposed. The presence of professional standards would also facilitate the creation of a professional autonomy and cultural base that further unifies teachers in FE.
3. That literacy is pluralized to literacies in adult social practices and is embedded in all that is done by the socio-functionally literate across the college curriculum. This raises calls for the crossing over of pedagogies of other subject areas (academic, vocational and leisure) to be facilitated to achieve a culture for adult literacy and the importance of its recognition at all levels other than as a source of funding for the college.

Implications for Future Studies:

In my research, data was obtained from conversations with five individual teachers, offering I hope, insight into the meaning of the experiences of teaching adult literacy in a FE college under

the auspices of the ALCC in England. The data collected was entirely focussed on the spoken description of individual experiences and subjected to phenomenological analysis.

One of the striking features for me as researcher and author of this study is that I had worked with all the co-researchers, we were colleagues in the college and we all taught adult literacy. I had insight into their personal and private lives and had developed a rapport which, on reflection, meant that much of what may have been communicated between us was unspoken but read from facial expression and body language. This by definition may have unconsciously influenced aspects of the data interpreted in the analysis if in the analysis of the data I did not sustain epoche throughout, much information may have been added. This is not an admission of any wrong doing on my part as the researcher but I was always conscious in the analysis of just focussing on the written data in front of me and nothing else. I hope the reader agrees.

A future qualitative study that incorporates the significance of unspoken or non verbal communication between researcher and co-researcher during interviews, conversations and so on could address the issue of lost and gained data. However, a phenomenological analytical approach could not be combined collaboratively with issue sub-questions to address this concern because the analysis process will rely heavily on the subjective interpretation of the non verbal data by the researcher. This has implications for the philosophical assumptions of ontology and epistemology of phenomenology as a research methodology and philosophical mode of inquiry.

Another potential research area that arose in the course of my research is that subjective perspectives may change with time. My study, whilst of value in providing a description of teacher meaning under the auspices of the ALCC, captured the experience as it was expressed

within a short time frame (2002-2005) and as a result could not be representative of a continuum of experience for adult literacy teachers because phenomenon and how humans perceive their experience of it may change with time.

Having suggested in *Changes and consequence*, (Chapter Two, pp 29-31) that the FE sector is never static, particularly when there is a shift in the central governments' educational priorities and the subsequent shift in the emphasis for funding from one group of students to the next (Jameson and Hillier, 2003), the essences of the subjective co-researcher perspective may change in relation to the descriptions of individual experiences. For this reason intermittent phenomenological studies that ask, "what is it like for you?" could be conducted to track any changes in individual and personal ideology and subsequent meaning in relation to teaching adult literacy within the context in question over a period of specified time. For example, would the cautious optimism of Sean and the cynicism of the novice Jasmine both change into the emotional apathy of Zandi, the andragogic abstinence of Janice or the contradicting certainty-uncertainty of Enid? Or would they experience none of the above over time? The series of studies may also address the presence of interventional strategies that individuals employ to maintain their own concepts of professionalism and what it is to be a teacher of adult literacy within the sub-plot of the new professionalisms expected of the FE teacher that Lucas (2004) brings to the fore in his writing.

My research did also briefly highlight the role of the adult student in determining what was to be overtly transmitted within the adult literacy classroom. The relationship between teacher and students was paramount for the teachers in this study in relation to how the teacher would

interact with the curriculum. For this reason, as well as gaining an understanding of teaching under the auspices of the ALCC, qualitative research focussing on the experiences of adult literacy students would add important understanding of how the students perceive the reactions and behaviours of their teacher in the facilitation of student meaning of adult literacy. Perhaps in asking adult students, *What is it like for you to be taught adult literacy?* complementary phenomenological research such as this will pinpoint effective discursive mechanisms that maintain positive communication between the adult literacy teacher and the adult student and create an understanding of dialogue between student and teacher within a functionalist context that the ALCC prescribes (van den Berg, 2002). Perhaps this will also answer another important question in relation to how adult students perceive the fact that they, as adults, are being offered a qualification within the accreditation model presented in accordance with the ALCC that is different from the mainstream GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). Particularly by using the curriculum's diagnostic and summative assessment tools if they are assessed to be operating at or around the ALCC's level one (L1) or level two (L2) which is equivalent to GCSE grades D-G (L1) and GCSE grades A-C (L2)? Aside from this, it may provide a mechanism to identify whether ambiguity exists in the use of equivocal and vague terms like 'meaningful and 'relevant' in the literacy as social practice context. The integral meaning of these words for the individual would become more evident through phenomenological analysis which will bring to the fore any disparity between teacher and student meaning. This will pave the way for a means of ideological and philosophical exploration to identify practical strategies to agree meaning between teacher and student rather than meaning consensus being accidental or assumed (Baptiste et al, 2003; Herrington and Kendall, 2005; van den Berg, 2002).

The recommendations that follow are a summary of the recommendations that appear in the

discussions generated around the implications for policy and practice that emerged within this chapter of this phenomenological study.

Summary of recommendations

- That mechanisms are put in place to facilitate communication forums for adult literacy teachers and students to contribute to dialogue with policy makers and government representatives. This is to address the development of existing or new policies pertaining to adult literacy as a broad social phenomenon rather than the acquisition of a series of centrally sanctioned behaviours and skills.
- That with central government backing, in-situ mentoring support delivered from experts with appropriate resources is provided for teachers of adult literacy to develop adult literacies as a process of social practice that sanctions the reconciliation of unofficial adult social practices with accredited and centrally approved functional adult literacy practices and skills.
- That professional standards of practice are negotiated, agreed and developed between teachers, institutions and government as opposed to occupational standards entrenched with government targets and the ability to tick functional skills achievement boxes being imposed for teachers of adult literacy and teachers in FE generally.
- That FE colleges free up the timetables of adult literacy teachers and encourage and support their active participation in on-going training and research in the field.
- That the wider college curriculum acknowledges the role of the teaching of adult literacy practices beyond its presence as a source of government funding.
- That further phenomenological research answers the question: What was it like for you?

From the perspective of the adult literacy learner, both in discrete and mainstream provision, under the auspices of the ALCC.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Introduction

The uniqueness of this study is characterised by a description of the human and social condition, and thus the intrinsic totality of teaching adult literacy in the presence of the ALCC and the confounding consequence for co-researchers, that is, the moral obligation that emerges.

In closing, this study that asks *How was it for you?* to teachers of adult literacy, under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) has given me the opportunity to consider my data, analysis and findings in relation to what is apparent in the existing literature. Moreover, that has occurred as a means of validating the need to know the actual and possible meanings of what it is to teach adult literacy in a further education context.

What was already established was the adage that adult literacy means different things to different people. What was also already established was the complexity that defining literacy creates. Inherent within this is the further complexity of redefining literacy as ‘literacies’ in humanistic and social practice terms. These challenges caused me to debate the nature of this phenomenon beyond the routine assumption of its theoretical possibilities. The presence and implementation of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum came with its own definition of adult literacy, and presented from a functionalist perspective, gave it a context within which adult literacy teachers

do what they are paid to do, and within which it was presented to adult learners who came with perceived and negotiated learning agendas.

Contribution to knowledge

What this study has established is that my co-researchers welcomed the accessible structure of the ALCC as a plateau of practice. This unified them to a degree in terms of the use of its materials and assessment resources, and its support in the setting of individual learner targets as they relate to the strategic progress markers which made the ALCC tangible, not just for the adult learner but also for the co-researchers themselves. What this study has uniquely done is to capture the very nature of the professional experience in terms of its meanings and essences. This was achieved through the textural-structural descriptions philosophically derived at via phenomenological reduction and analysis. It portrays the less than fully formed relationship between teachers of adult literacy and the ALCC during its presence between 2002 and 2005 in a further education college in southwest London, England. The findings of this study culminate in Table X. In the reading of this culmination there is no intention to generate pathos because its content is not intended as poignant; instead, the study's findings contain within its frame a portrayal of basic humanistic and distinctive qualities that are the very nature of the co-researchers professional experiences. Table X is presented to create *wonder in the reader's mind* and for the reader to accept that sensations of 'guilt', 'forbearance' and 'definitive joy' are conceptually enigmatic and complex yet consciously part of making the teaching of adult literacy what it is for my erudite co-researchers because of, and despite of, teaching under the auspices of the ALCC. Through discussion, this study positioned these meanings and essences into the potential for creating a greater sense of autonomy for adult literacy teachers in recognition that

they, on some levels, consciously endeavour to juggle their learner-centredness and its social and moral connotations with the aspirations of central government and their adult learners.

Unlike other research studies pertaining to the presence of the ALCC, my research does not seek to examine the effectiveness of the ALCC or the *Skills for Life* strategy as a whole initiative and its impact in the lives of adult learners, or the generation of teacher qualifications that pertain to it. From the perspective of addressing the qualities of what was experienced and how it was experienced, this study did not intend to encompass the psychological dimensions of teacher experiences but I make no apologies if the reader perceives this study to have done so. Neither did this study seek to prescribe change. Instead it became an opportunity to present a narrative from the interpretation of the perspectives of teachers that engages with the role and use of functional literacy as a socio-political concept espoused by central government. In the discussions, implications and recommendations generated, this study also highlighted avenues for dialogue for support from expert resources for adult literacy teachers and put forward the notion of professional standards for teaching practice. This study does not enjoin, but offers green shoots of awareness and insight for teachers of adult literacy and for policy makers in FE institutions and within central government to consider the inherent structures that my co-researchers are presented with teaching under the auspices of the phenomenon that is the ALCC.

A personal journey

From a personal perspective, I conclude by stating that the journey to complete this study was arduous but its value in relation to my professional growth is incalculable, particularly as I continue to teach adult literacy in educational settings where practices and local policies are

bombarded with and influenced by ideologically and philosophically loaded political dogma. I have developed a tendency to analyse rationally, question and reflect upon change instead of just reacting to it with naive recrimination and indignation. As a consequence of conducting this study, I have grown professionally and socially.

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Appendix A

MODIFICATION OF THE STEVICK - COLAIZZI - KEEN METHOD OF ANALYSIS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL DATA

Adapted from Moustakas, 1994 (pp 121-122)

1. Using a phenomenological approach obtain a full description of each experience of the phenomenon.

2. From the verbatim transcript of each experience complete the following steps:
 - a. Consider each statement with respect to the significance for description of the experience.
 - b. Record all relevant statements.
 - c. List each non-repetitive, non-overlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience.
 - d. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
 - e. Synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes into a *description of the textures of the experience*.
 - f. Reflect on the textural description. Through imaginative variation, construct a *description of the structures of the experience*.
 - g. Construct a *textural-structural description* of the meanings and essences of the experience.

3. From the individual textual-structural descriptions of each co-researchers' experience, construct a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole.

Appendix B

Co-researcher 2: Janice

Pen-portrait of the co-researcher

Janice is a forty-something year old woman who was born in a west African country and was raised and educated in the UK. Janice teaches on a part-time basis as a main-grade lecturer and has taught adult literacy in the south west London context for two academic years. Prior to this Janice had taught literacy for several years in another institution. Janice's current circumstance of teaching literacy is similar to Enid's in that she works in the same department but on a different site.

The Adult literacy Core Curriculum was used in a different way in Janice's former place of work. As a result she has not found the transition of teaching literacy using different administrative procedures, evidencing systems and differentiation strategies easy, but, at the time of writing, she was in the process of addressing these issues with support from more experienced colleagues. I have been Janice's work place mentor for the equivalent of one academic year. During this time Janice demonstrated that she was particularly adept at assimilating advice and suggestions and blending these into her own teaching and learning practices whilst delivering adult literacy.

The conversation / research interview [Table 1]

The following table contains the verbatim transcript of an excerpt of a conversation that took place between the second co-researcher, Janice and I, as a result of asking Janice to describe her lived experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core

Curriculum .

S = Sophia [researcher]

J = Janice [co-researcher]

J	You're not asking questions?
S	I might be, but now I just want you to talk to me about how you have found teaching literacy and using the curriculum
J	Interesting, umm, I quite like it. I enjoy, I enjoy doing it actually, umm.
S	Why do you enjoy doing it?
J	Because you see the results, you know. You, umm, one day they, they can't even spell the days of the week, the following week they can spell it and they know the sequence of Monday, Tuesday, rather than mixing it up. Umm, umm, to me I enjoy it. I enjoy seeing the fruit of my labours so to speak. So yeah, I do enjoy it. And most of the work in the Core Curriculum is geared towards our students in the sense that, umm, it talks about where they live, you know umm, what happened to them, have they had a good day or umm or some more subtle things like that. I think that helps them, you know, to identify [pause] their needs.
S	It talks about real stuff?
J	Yeah. Yeah. It talks about umm, things they can relate to, you know [pause]. And it reminds them like, things like, how to fill a form in. how do you make an appointment at the G.P. Cos they might not know because maybe their parents have been doing it for them all their life. You know. They can't when it comes to it. They want to know how to do it, you know. The language used is for them. So yeah, I like that, yeah.
S	Are there any aspects of it you don't like?
J	I do think that there should be more resources, you know. You find that something works and you can't get to use it, umm, it's a big let down. You know, we need more, umm, coloured paper pads to stimulate them and stuff like that you know. You can't find it. Sometimes it's difficult.
S	Sometimes I adapt resources or make my own resource, especially if I need them...
J	You can though, and sometimes you can't, especially if it depends on how much time you've got. You know, umm, lets say you're doing a lesson plan and you don't have the resources, you know, and some of the resources like, umm, a coloured printer, you know. Some of these things have to be done in colour to help them with their learning. You know. And then you can't find them. It's difficult.
S	How do think the students like using the Core curriculum's resources, you know, those printable worksheets.
J	Well. Some people can cope, you know. It can be difficult especially if they don't want to work or they think they won't be able to do it. But I think it; it pays if you go through it with them step-by-step. You know, and help them and don't forget their peers will help them because they find out their peers will help them along. You know.

Record of significant statements for the description of the experience [Table 2]

1. I quite like it. I enjoy, I enjoy doing it actually
2. Because you see the results...one day they, they can't spell the days of the week, the following week they can spell it and they know the sequence of Monday, Tuesday, rather than mixing it up...I enjoy seeing the fruits of my labour so to speak.
3. ...most of the work in the Core Curriculum is geared towards our students in the sense that...it talks about where they live...what happened to them; have they had a good day...or more subtle things like that.
4. I think it helps them...to identify their needs.
5. It talks about...things they can relate to
6. It reminds them, things like, how to fill a form in; how do you make an appointment at the G.P. Cos they might not know because maybe their parents have been doing it for them all their life.
7. The language used is for them.
8. There should be more resources.
9. Some of these things have been done in colour to help them with their learning.
10. It can be difficult especially if they don't want to work or they think they won't be able to do it.
11. ...I think it, it pays if you go through it with them step-by-step
12. ...and don't forget their peers will help them because they find out their peers will help them along.

A list of non-repetitive and non overlapping statements [Table 3].

1. I quite like it
2. Because you see the results...one day they can't spell the days of the week, the following week they can...
3. I enjoy seeing the fruits of my labours.
4. Most of the work in the Core Curriculum is geared towards our students.
5. I think it helps them... to identify their needs.
6. It talks about... things they can relate to.
7. It reminds them, things like, how to fill a form in; how do you make an appointment at the G.P.
8. The language used is for them
9. There should be more resources
10. Some of the things have been done in colour to help them with their learning
11. ...I think it pays if you go through it with them step-by-step
12. Their peers will help them too.

Related and clustered invariant units in themes [Table 4]

<p>Rewards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I quite like it ➤ You see the results ➤ I enjoy seeing the fruits of my labours ➤ I think it pays if you go through it with them step-by-step
<p>Relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Most of the work in the Core curriculum is geared towards our students ➤ I think it helps them... to identify their needs ➤ It talks about things they can relate to ➤ It reminds... them how to fill a form in; how to make an appointment at the G.P.
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There should be more resources ➤ ...things have been done in colour to help them ➤ Their peers will help them too.

Synthesis of the invariant meaning units into a description of the texture of the experience with verbatim examples [Table 5]

For Janice the experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (ALCC) has been nothing other than pleasurable and this she measures in relation to her experience of being rewarded by the sensation of what it has meant to her. *'Interesting, umm, I quite like it. I enjoy it; I enjoy doing it actually...'* For Janice, the gratification of having the ALCC and its learning and teaching resources is also measured by her experience of having seen the positive impact on her students that the application of the curriculum has brought about: *'Because you see the results...one day they, they can't even spell the days of the week, the following week they can spell it and they know the sequence...I enjoy seeing the fruits of my labours'*.

The confidence that Janice has experienced has been bought about by the tried and tested process that she has used to teach literacy to her adult students *'...it pays if you go through it with them step-by-step.'* And this has been the process used to enable the less able to *'...cope...'* and Janice marks these experiences as being challenge that she is prepared to face *'...It can be difficult especially if they don't want to work or they think they won't be able to do it'*. Janice has also been buoyantly positive because of its relevance to the students she teaches, *'Most of the work in the Core Curriculum is geared towards our students'*. The Curriculum's vernacular has been made penetrable by accessible language and formats via which Janice has supported her students to identify their own learning needs in relation to practical everyday applications: *'It talks about things they can relate to...I think it helps them identify...their own needs...It reminds them...how to fill a form in; how to make an appointment at the G.P.'*

Janice does mark her experience with a downside that centres upon the resources that are available to teach her students with. In stating that, *'There should be more resources.'* Janice indicates that the learning and teaching needs of her students can not all be met by the curriculum alone and that the college has a role to play in the provision of resources that support the curriculum's application *'...coloured printers ...some of these things have to be done in colour to help them with their learning'*. She also extends this function to other more able students in the groups taught: *'Their peers will help them too'*

Through approaching the phenomenon from differing philosophical perspectives ('Imaginative Variation'), a description of how the phenomenon was experienced or 'structures of the experience'. [Table 6].

The structures that underpin and permeate Janice's experience are expressed in relation to: the rewards for herself; relevance to the students and in terms of resources that are readily available to support teaching and learning in her classroom.

The use of the ALCC is marked for Janice by her clarity of how enjoyable the experience has been. For Janice there is a sense of control, reassurance and completeness and teacher satisfaction derived from the positive measured outcomes achieved by her students. This is particularly facilitated by her perception that the resources and learning objectives contained within the curriculum are developed with her students in mind. From this comes a confidence and the verification Janice needs to feel content about transmitting its knowledge and the accompanying vernacular. Janice has been enabled to teach adult literacy without a sense of threat to her own professionalism and to the meaningfulness in the lives of her students; even within a context where the absence of a particular resource she feels will enhance student learning is not always present. In her use of the ALCC, Janice acknowledges that much of the job of teaching adult literacy has been done for her and that this fulfilment is further perpetuated by her acknowledgement that students whom are more capable of accessing its vernacular, will support less able students within her classroom.

Textural-structural description of the meaning and essence of Janice's experience [Table7]

Janice appreciates the ALCC's convenience of use, its receptiveness to her needs as a teacher of adult literacy and the affirmation and confidence it affords her when she can see what her students have achieved. Janice embraces the curriculum and with it she shares a consensus of what the perceived student learning need is and what student learning outcomes there should be. Janice welcomes the reassurance and clarity of the curriculum's vernacular and praises its relevance to her students in its presentation of learning situations that address ordinary, everyday, functional and adult contexts that her students may not otherwise get the opportunity to experience.

The interdependent symbiotic relationship Janice has with the ALCC, the deference that Janice conveys to it, and what it as a learning curriculum gives her, create for Janice a situation where she does not feel a need to question who has the responsibility for what adult students learn. For Janice there is a sense of completeness where questioning concerning notions of ownership and power are of little or no consequence.

Appendix C

Co-researcher 3: Sean

Pen-portrait of the co-researcher:

Sean is a fifty-something year old white, English man who was raised and educated in the UK. He is a main-grade lecturer with several additional coordinating duties including the coordination of additional learning support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. He has taught adult literacy for many years and has taught it specifically in this south west London context for over a decade. Sean teaches adult literacy to adults who have mental health issues and whom are either based in the college attending courses there or are taught in their residential or day-centre setting which he visits as an outreach lecturer.

Sean is very passionate about the concepts of access and meaningfulness and demonstrates particular talents for adapting and producing teaching and learning resources to meet the needs of his students and for sharing relevant, insightful and constructive ideas amongst the departmental team. Sean and I have shared an office for three academic years.

Since the introduction of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, Sean has been through a continuing process of examining and re-examining what he teaches and to whom in relation to where student interests lay whether vocational, academic or within general interests and leisure.

The conversation / research interview [Table 1]

The following table contains the verbatim transcript of part of a conversation that took place between the third co-researcher, Sean and I, as a result of asking Sean to describe his experience of teaching adult literacy as it relates to the interview question.

S = Sophia [researcher]
Si = Sean [co-researcher]

Si	I think that the Core Curriculum framework has helped me in the past eighteen months. It's given me a much tighter framework to work to and with and a structure. I, I can at least attempt [pause] to explain to uhh, students. Umm, and my explanation seems to have worked. And also I have been pleased to note that my assumptions about people's levels have been generally around the targets so therefore the kind of assessments that we are now doing have been positive in terms of literacy and appropriate. The adult students appear to enjoy, uhh, tackling those assessments and then, and then, to begin to follow up and think about setting goals for themselves really.
S	In terms of more qualifications or...?
Si	Umm. No. Generally. Umm, well because, I, I work with the Bridging Course where there aren't any formal qualifications so in terms of level one and level two, has more significance to them, in terms of the context that, umm, and I think, it's given students in that situation something too, something quite tangible and that there is a lot of kudos about being on that cusp of level one and level two and they seem to enjoy it. Umm. In terms of other courses though, ah, I mean, I work, I do outreach work at a mental health hospital and for those students it's quite affirming because, uhh, these are students who for one reason or another have been well away from education for a number of years and really have no sense of where they're at. Cos I found that, uhh, the reference method the curriculum's given has given them an opportunity to make a more realistic assessment about, about what they can achieve over say eighteen months. Uhh, so that's useful. Umm, and again the whole business of bringing alive the level one, level two, level three or whatever; that's bringing that alive for them and is an opening to the curriculum across the college. And has made things seem more tangible. Umm, and college courses therefore become more get-at-able from their perspective.
S	Do you think it raises their sort of expectations?

Si	<p>Umm. Umm. Well it. I think it makes it more realistic. I'll give you an example where I worked recently with a student who umm, umm, who, who, had very umm, umm, who had very fanciful notions of what he might do. He wanted to become a sound engineer. Whatever that means. It became clear to me that while he had a real interest in it, he didn't really know what he was talking about and therefore didn't really know about the level of achievement he'd have to reach. So, when we looked at him, we looked at his literacy profile, we were able to make adjustments sensitively umm, by seeing what he could, what he was already achieving and by acknowledging and affirming what he was achieving and then setting, more sort of, umm, more sort of graduated steps to see where he could, if he's going to come to college, where he could realistically enter it. Now he's thinking about doing the Bridging Course and therefore to continue to gain self-confidence as an adult learner and the, umm, think about, umm, think about, umm, about the mainstream and level three courses. So, I think, a lot of this for adults is about, umm, gaining some degree of clarity and also, umm, umm, well for all the students that I work with, beginning to see themselves as people capable of learning. Capable of moving on. I saw that [background distraction]. Shall I just go on?</p>
S	<p>Yep.</p>
Si	<p>I saw that [background distraction continues]. Working with literacy in the past, I saw that people just went round the block. Uhh. And once you've got a problem as an adult, you're constantly defined as having a problem with your spelling, or your grammar, or your whatever; you're not allowed out of the box. You just, whatever you try to do, you end up in another literacy group and you're likely to end up with a group that's mixed; very, very mixed in terms of ability and potential. And that must be very deflating. And I've seen students who have been deflated like that. Now; what we are offering now; I think the Core Curriculum offers people the substance to get out of that little corral by setting small goals and targets and again, because its all...I think the materials we're using now, the materials that are available to us now are great because they are all adult orientated. Umm, umm, and umm...</p>
S	<p>I suppose we can all adapt them now.</p>
Si	<p>We can adapt them, yes. Exactly. I've never used...I've made the mistake occasionally of using the Core curriculum stuff as a sort of copy; not out of laziness, but just to see if it would work. And I've always found that it has always had to be quite carefully adapted for one reason or another. Often because, in my case, I'm working with people with mental health difficulties and there are certain topics and subjects that are meant to be mentally stimulating. They would be good subjects to talk about, say for example, travel or attitudes to home, but have been very difficult for our students to tackle and come to terms with. Umm, I think also, umm, in terms of Access for All, umm, you know. I've been aware of this...I'm getting a bit tired of the term spiky profile cos I don't find it tremendously helpful actually. I get a bit... I think it probably needs to be more aware that all adult learners potentially have that spiky profile because they, because they have that exacting experience that our students have at some point. Umm, umm, shall I just go on and on?</p>
S	<p>Yep.</p>

Si	O.K. Umm. What I have difficulty with, with the business of umm... What I'm not using correctly at all is... I'm not honing in on all the individual targets in the framework. I'm not always saying this is E-one-point-whatever, or this is the R-W element. And I found I, I, I don't know if this is a thought of mind; it probably is, but I found that quite difficult to get across to students [pause]. What I am very good at is getting across to students and, and, enabling students to reflect on where they use the curriculum elements or where they have used all the different skills and differentiated all the different skills that make up being an effective communicator. And it is also been tremendously valuable to put that emphasis on; well not emphasis, but to remind students that people are listening and that all that that goes with it isn't essential.
S	We need to remind lecturers about that as well.
Si	Lecturers haven't got a clue about that.
S	Some really take that for granted actually.

Si	<p>Yer, well thinking about that, that is something that very seriously needs to be addressed in colleges. In this college. Cos, you've got students doing all kinds of practical work but really, but really a lot of time, umm, the Moser assessment and everything comes back to an emphasis on reading and writing and that's not helped by a sort of furious sort of enslavement to a, to the key skills tests that entraps the students through the year. It makes... I find that takes away from the skills that ... or, doesn't give enough, or pay enough attention to the skills that the students already have and that they can easily develop in terms of, you know... if you are going to work with children the first thing you've got to do is to be able to use your observation skills very intently. You've got to be, you've got to know, to understand there are all kinds of communication codes to spot where there might be a difficulty or to, or to spot where... how to work effectively with others. I really don't think that, umm, one tenth of the attention is paid to that that needs to be paid. Umm. So... umm, I think that in whatever research they are doing as follow-up to 'Skills for Life', this really does need to be addressed because otherwise, coming back to what I said at the beginning, you're just encouraging teachers to do what they, I think, they like to do which is to mark little grid boxes and say we did all this and that lot, instead of allowing the freeing up of the material so that the student can really engage in and see how it is directly relevant to them working in a garden, or a building site or a crèche. And, unless, unless, unless, umm, people can use the materials and resources in that way, they're just going to turn into stale, photocopy fashions and crumbs of society. This was surely the intention of the setting up of the Core Curriculum in the first place, to make, to make things come alive for people. Umm, and I think that's got implications as well for the way we present the curriculum. One of the dangers of giving everybody those lovely folders is that they think, well I've got this pack, well now I'll use this pack. When actually if you and I and anybody has really thought about differentiation... I think we have to think about differentiation because of the diversity of students we work with. But anybody who has thought about it realizes that those packs are only just like little triggers and should be treated as such. Umm, and also it's affirming to what you already do. Cos, a lot of that stuff and ideas is already familiar because we're already done all that. It's only a tool pack and it's dangerous if people assume that it's all in there because it really isn't.</p> <p>I think there is lots of mileage too and lots more that I personally need to do now about lifting, umm, about getting more activities off the page. And not, I'm not saying absolutely crucial, but I think to get that agreement we need to use all kinds of strategies, devices, tools and equipment and resources. Cameras. The full works, umm, to, to make it come alive for people and make it firmly practical. Just thinking about it, I mean I could. I realize now, that I could teach on all kinds of courses. I wouldn't mind doing that. Keep it real. Diversify. Umm. So do you want me to sum up?</p>
S	Yep.
Si	<p>I wanted to just say it is that what I need [laughs] well what I need is time to reflect on, and I really do need time to ... I need follow up training in how to use the system; how to get at all the elements of the system effectively for myself and for all my students; how to do more follow up on those initial assessments; how to keep reviewing by giving further assessments to reinforce to the students that we are reaching the targets regularly. And, how to share with the students that sense of achieving major, major goals, and how to present that in a way that is immediately accessible to the student and not just have a grid that I keep in my draw which is something for the college but nothing for the student.</p>

Record of significant statements for the description of the experience [Table 2]

1. I think that the Core Curriculum framework has helped me...
2. It's given me a much tighter framework to work to and with, and a structure.
3. ...I have been pleased to not that my assumptions about people's level have been generally around the targets so therefore the kind of assessments that we are now doing have been positive in terms of literacy and appropriate.
4. The adult students appear to enjoy, uhh, tackling those assessments and then, and then, to begin to follow up and think about setting goals for themselves really.
5. ...in terms of level one and level two, has more significance to them, in terms of the context that, umm, and I think, it's given students in that situation something too, something quite tangible and that there is a lot of kudos about being on that cusp of level one and level two and they seem to enjoy it.
6. ...I do outreach work at a mental health hospital and for those students it's quite affirming because, uhh, these are students who for one reason or another have been well away from education for a number of years and really have no sense of where they're at
7. I found that, uhh, the reference method the curriculum's given has given them an opportunity to make a more realistic assessment about, about what they can achieve over say eighteen months.
8. ...so that's useful.
9. ...and again the whole business of bringing alive the level one, level two, level three or whatever; that's bringing that alive for them and is an opening to the curriculum across the college.
10. And has made things seem more tangible.
11. I think it makes it more realistic.
12. ...I think a lot of this for adults is about, umm, gaining some degree of clarity... well for all the students that I work with, beginning to see themselves as [people capable of learning.
13. Working with literacy in the past I saw that people just went round the block.
14. I think the Core Curriculum offers people the substance to get out of the little corral by setting small goals and targets and again, because its all...I think the materials we're using now, the materials that are available to us now are great because they are all adult orientated.
15. We can adapt them.
16. I've made the mistake of using the Core Curriculum stuff as a sort of copy; not out of laziness, but just to see if it would work.
17. And I've always found that it has always had to be quite carefully adapted for one reason or another. Often because, in my case, I'm working with people with mental health difficulties and there are certain topics and subjects that are meant to be mentally stimulating. They would be good subjects to talk about, say for example, travel or attitudes to home, but have been very difficult for our students to tackle and come to terms with. Umm, I think also, umm, in terms of Access for All, umm, you know.

18. I'm getting a bit tired of the term spiky profile cos I don't find it tremendously helpful actually. I get a bit... I think it probably needs to be more aware that all adult learners potentially have that spiky profile because they, because they have that exacting experience that our students have at some point.
19. ... What I'm not using correctly at all is... I'm not honing in on all the individual targets in the framework.
20. . I'm not always saying this is E-one-point-whatever, or this is the R-W element. And I found I, I, I don't know if this is a thought of mind: it probably is, but I found that quite difficult to get across to students
21. What I am very good at is getting across to students and, and, enabling students to reflect on where they use the curriculum elements or where they have used all the different skills and differentiated all the different skills that make up being an effective communicator.
22. And it is also been tremendously valuable to put that emphasis on; well not emphasis, but top remind students that people are listening and that all that that goes with it isn't essential.
23. Lecturers haven't got a clue about that.
24. ...that is something that very seriously needs to be addressed in colleges. In this college. Cos, you've got students doing all kinds of practical work but really, but really a lot of time, umm, the Moser assessment and everything comes back to an emphasis on reading and writing and that's not helped by a sort of furious sort of enslavement to a, to the key skills tests that entraps the students through the year.
25. It makes... I find that takes away from the skills that ... or, doesn't give enough, or pay enough attention to the skills that the students already have and that they can easily develop in terms of, you know... if you are going to work with children the first thing you've got to do is to be able to use your observation skills very intently.
26. I think that in whatever research they are doing as follow-up to 'Skills for Life', this really does need to be addressed because otherwise, coming back to what I said at the beginning, you're just encouraging teachers to do what they, I think, they like to do which is to mark little grid boxes and say we did all this and that lot, instead of allowing the freeing up of the material so that the student can really engage in and see how it is directly relevant to them working in a garden, or a building site or a crèche.
27. And, unless, unless, unless, umm, people can use the materials and resources in that way, they're just going to turn into stale, photocopy fashions and crumbs of society.
28. This was surely the intention of the setting up of the Core Curriculum in the first place, to make, to make things come alive for people.
29. One of the dangers of giving everybody those lovely folders is that they think, well I've got this pack, well now I'll use this pack. When actually if you and I and anybody has really thought about differentiation... I think we have to think about differentiation because of the diversity of students we work with.
30. But anybody who has thought about it realizes that those packs are only just like little triggers and should be treated as such. Umm, and also it's affirming to what you already do. Cos, a lot of that stuff and ideas is already familiar because we're already done all that.
31. It's only a tool pack and it's dangerous if people assume that it's all in there because it really isn't.

32. I think to get that agreement we need to use all kinds of strategies, devices, tools and equipment and resources. Cameras. The full works, umm, to, to make it come alive for people and make it firmly practical.
33. ...what I need is time to reflect on, and I really do need time to ... I need follow up training in how to use the system; how to gat at all the elements of the system effectively for myself and for all my students; how to do more follow up on those initial assessments; how to keep reviewing by giving further assessments to reinforce to the students that we are reaching the targets regularly.
34. And, how to share with the students that sense of achieving major, major goals, and how to present that in a way that is immediately accessible to the student and not just have a grid that I keep in my draw which is something for the college but nothing for the student

A list of non-repetitive and non overlapping statements [Table 3].
These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience

1. I think that the Core Curriculum framework has helped me
2. It's given me a much tighter framework to work to and with and a structure.
3. ...the kind of assessments that we are now doing have been positive in terms of literacy and appropriate.
4. ...it's given students in that situation something... quite tangible and that there is a lot of kudos about being on that cusp of level one and level two and they seem to enjoy it.
5. ...and for those students it's quite affirming
6. ...the reference method the curriculum's given, has given them an opportunity to make a more realistic assessment about...what they can achieve over say eighteen months.
7. ...that's bringing that alive for them and is an opening to the curriculum across the college.
8. Working with literacy in the past I saw that people just went round the block.
9. I think the Core Curriculum offers people the substance to get out of the little corral by setting small goals and targets and ...I think the materials... that are available to us now are great because they are all adult orientated.
10. We can adapt them.
11. I've made the mistake of using the Core Curriculum stuff as a sort of copy; not out of laziness, but just to see if it would work.
12. ...I've always found that it has always had to be quite carefully adapted for one reason or another.

13. ...there are certain topics and subjects that are meant to be mentally stimulating. They would be good subjects to talk about... but have been very difficult for our students to tackle and come to terms with.
14. I'm getting a bit tired of the term spiky profile cos I don't find it tremendously helpful actually. I get a bit... I think it probably needs to be more aware that all adult learners potentially have that spiky profile... because they have that exacting experience that our students have at some point.
15. What I'm not using correctly at all is... I'm not honing in on all the individual targets in the framework.
16. I'm not always saying this is E-one-point-whatever, or this is the R-W element. And I found... that quite difficult to get across to students
17. What I am very good at is getting across to students and... enabling students to reflect on where they use the curriculum elements or where they have used all the different skills and differentiated all the different skills that make up being an effective communicator.
18. ...remind students that people are listening and that all that that goes with it isn't essential.
19. Lecturers haven't got a clue about that.
20. ...everything comes back to an emphasis on reading and writing and that's not helped by a sort of furious sort of enslavement to ...the key skills tests that entraps the students through the year.
21. I find that takes away from the skills that ... or, doesn't give enough, or pay enough attention to the skills that the students already have and that they can easily develop
22. I think that in whatever research they are doing as follow-up to 'Skills for Life', this really does need to be addressed because otherwise, ... you're just encouraging teachers to do what they ...like to do which is to mark little grid boxes and say we did all this and that lot, instead of allowing the freeing up of the material so that the student can really engage in and see how it is directly relevant to them working in a garden, or a building site or a crèche.
23. And, unless.... people can use the materials and resources in that way, they're just going to turn into stale, photocopy fashions and crumbs of society.
24. This was surely the intention of the setting up of the Core Curriculum in the first place...to make things come alive for people
25. One of the dangers of giving everybody those lovely folders is that they think ... I've got this pack... now I'll use this pack. When actually... I think we have to think about differentiation because of the diversity of students we work with.
26. It's only a tool pack and it's dangerous if people assume that it's all in there because it really isn't.
27. ...what I need is time to reflect on, and I really do need time to ... I need follow up training in how to use the system; how to gat at all the elements of the system effectively for myself and for all my students; how to do more follow up on those initial assessments; how to keep reviewing by giving further assessments to reinforce to the students that we are reaching the targets regularly.
28. And, how to share with the students that sense of achieving major, major goals, and how to present that in a way that is immediately accessible to the student and not just have a grid that I keep in my draw which is something for the college but nothing for the student

Related and clustered invariant units in themes [Table 4]

Supportive

- I think that the Core Curriculum framework has helped me
- It's given me a much tighter framework to work to and with, and a structure.
- ...the kind of assessments that we are now doing have been positive in terms of literacy and appropriate
- I think the Core Curriculum offers people the substance to get out of the little corral by setting small goals and targets and ...I think ...the materials that are available to us now are great because they are all adult orientated
- We can adapt them
- I've made the mistake of using the Core Curriculum stuff as a sort of copy; not out of laziness, but just to see if it would work
- And I've always found that it has always had to be quite carefully adapted for one reason or another.
- What I am very good at is getting across to students and...enabling students to reflect on where they use the curriculum elements or where they have used all the different skills and differentiated all the different skills that make up being an effective communicator
- It's only a tool pack and it's dangerous if people assume that it's all in there because it really isn't.

Relevance

- ...it's given students in that situation something...quite tangible and that there is a lot of kudos about being on that cusp of level one and level two and they seem to enjoy it.
- ...for those students it's quite affirming
- ...the reference method the curriculum's given, has given them an opportunity to make a more realistic assessment about...what they can achieve
- ...that's bringing that alive for them and is an opening to the curriculum across the college.

Discrepancies

- ...I've always found that it has always had to be quite carefully adapted for one reason or another.
- ...there are certain topics and subjects that are meant to be mentally stimulating. They would be good subjects to talk about...but have been very difficult for our students to tackle and come to terms with.
- I'm getting a bit tired of the term spiky profile cos I don't find it tremendously helpful actually...I think it probably needs to be more aware that all adult learners potentially have that spiky profile because they...have that exacting experience that our students have at some point.
- ... What I'm not using correctly at all is... I'm not honing in on all the individual targets in the framework
- I'm not always saying this is E-one-point-whatever, or this is the R-W element. And I found ...that quite difficult to get across to students
- Lecturers haven't got a clue about that
- ...everything comes back to an emphasis on reading and writing and that's not helped by a sort of furious sort of enslavement to...the key skills tests that entraps the students through the year.
- I find that takes away from the skills... or doesn't give enough ...attention to the skills that the students already have and that they can easily develop
- ...you're just encouraging teachers to do what they... like to do which is to mark little grid boxes and say we did all this and that lot, instead of allowing the freeing up of the material so that the student can really engage in and see how it is directly relevant to them working in a garden, or a building site or a crèche.
- And, unless...people can use the materials and resources in that way, they're just going to turn into stale, photocopy fashions and crumbs of society.
- One of the dangers of giving everybody those lovely folders is that they think...I've got this pack, now ...I'll use this pack. When actually ...I think we have to think about differentiation because of the diversity of students we work with.
- ...what I need is time to reflect on, and I really do need time... I need follow up training in how to use the system; how to get at all the elements of the system effectively for myself and for all my students; how to do more follow up on those initial assessments; how to keep reviewing by giving further assessments to reinforce to the students that we are reaching the targets regularly.
- And, how to share with the students that sense of achieving major, major goals, and how to present that in a way that is immediately accessible to the student and not just have a grid that I keep in my draw which is something for the college but nothing for the student

Synthesis of the invariant meaning units into a description of the texture of the experience with verbatim examples [Table 5]

The experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC is for Sean, one that is supportive of his teaching practices; *'...I think the Core Curriculum has helped me...'*, and has given him a clear and definite process on which to build, *'...It's given me a much tighter framework to work to and with, and a structure.'* Sean grasps the merits that the accessible structure brings, both for himself and ultimately for his students. And his ability to transmit this knowledge, effectively to enable, has been a powerful and gratifying journey upon which Sean willingly embarks, *'What I am good at getting across to students and enabling students to reflect on where they use the curriculum elements or where they have used all the different skills and differentiated all the different skills that make up being an effective communicator.'*

Tooled with the ALCC, Sean is under no illusion about its inability to answer all the questions that his professionalism asks and whose materials he has found lacking in some fundamental feature that is relevant to his students in their learning context. *'I've made the mistake of using the Core Curriculum stuff as a sort of copy, not out of laziness, but just to see if it would work... and I've always found that it has always had to be quite carefully adapted for one reason or another.'* Sean is undaunted about this part of his work but his experience has taught him caution in the way the curriculum is regarded: the Core curriculum is for Sean only part of the adult literacy learning process that offers something but not everything to the discerning teacher, *'It's only a tool pack and its dangerous if people assume that it's all in there because it really isn't.'*

Sean's experience of teaching adult literacy is also marked by his acceptance of what opportunities the presence of the ALCC affords his adult students who are or have been presenting mental health problems; *'...it's given students in that situation something...quite tangible and that there is a lot of kudos about being on the cusp of level one and level two, and they seem to enjoy it.'* For Sean the meaningfulness of the curriculum in the lives of his students lights the pathway for the concretisation of his teacher's role; affirmation for his students is affirmation for himself particularly when what he achieves with his students opens up other learning avenues for them to pursue: *'...that's bringing that alive for them and is an opening to the curriculum across the college.'* The realisation of student ambitions to go further in their studies is only a part of Sean's inspiration; for him there has been another exacting consequence that gives him impetus, *'...the reference method the curriculum's given, has given them an opportunity to make a more realistic assessment about...what they can achieve.'* This guiding light, this clarity, this apparent transparency is for Sean one of the pinnacles of his experience, but Sean is not swept away with admiration for this document; for him there are fundamental discrepancies that the ALCC needs to attentive to in his relationship with it: *'...everything comes back to an emphasis on reading and writing and that's not helped by a sort of furious enslavement to...the key skills tests that entraps the students through the year.'* Contradicting and restricting how Sean is defining literacy as meaningful to adult learners, *'I find that takes away from the skills...or doesn't give enough...attention to the skills that the students already have and that they can easily develop.'* These skills, he recognises go beyond what is contained within the confines of the ALCC's referencing system which Sean has difficulty translating both into learning targets and in its transmission to students. But this failing is for Sean overshadowed by his ability to use the curriculum to ensure that students can identify and differentiate their own achievements without confusing them with subsidiary niceties. Differentiation is an aspect of teaching adult literacy that Sean displays a passion for but the sense of frustration he emits relates to his conviction of the situation amongst colleagues, *'Lecturers haven't got a clue about that!'* His ecclesiastic fervour about what the materials and resources encourages other teachers of adult literacy to do *'...you're just encouraging teachers to do what they...like to do which is to mark little grid boxes and say we did all this and that lot...instead of allowing the freeing up of the material so that the student can really engage in and see how it is directly relevant to them working in a garden, or a building site or a crèche.'* For Sean this brings to realisation a piercing acknowledgement and a passionate and predictable indictment of the implications for students, *'And, unless...people can use the materials and resources in that way, they're just going to turn into stale, photocopy fashions and crumbs of society'*

The ALCC's teaching packs have been given a significant role in the responsibility for Sean's admonitory stance but within that his years of experience calls for time to reflect upon and do something about the aspects of the ALCC that he has aspirations for: *'...I need follow up training in how to use the system, how to get at all the elements of the system effectively for myself and for all my students...'* As that sense of the potential in *'...achieving major, major goals...'* is devastatingly obvious to him.

Through approaching the phenomenon from differing philosophical perspectives ('Imaginative Variation'), a description of how the phenomenon was experienced or 'structures of the experiences' [Table 6].

The structures that underpin and permeate Sean's experiences of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC are expressed in relation to its supportive framework, the relevance of its structure to student learning and in relation to his sense of the discrepancies that exist within its content and intentions.

Sean's experience of the ALCC is attuned to his appreciation of what the framework offers him and his recognition that it supports his students too in terms of where they are in the riches and complexities that is his own experience. The powerful and gratifying positive student outcomes represented by the opening of varied avenues of learning and student movement from the discrete to the mainstream, has been all together affirming for Sean but, their successes are marred by his perceptions that this tool that is the curriculum is being misused by others. His accusatory caution directed at teachers of adult literacy who consume the curriculum wholesale and his concern about their apparent inability to recognise the potential dehumanisation of the social adult, undifferentiated and unchecked use of the ALCC turns put, stands firm and resolute. Sean's defensiveness about his own experiences of the use of the curriculum's resources, further fuel his passionate indignation; for him this is coupled with his recognition that the ALCC has more on offer than that which he is accessing and that whilst displaying a cautious optimism, his curiosity is also being constrained by time and the absence of appropriate training opportunities.

The meaning in Sean's relationship with the ALCC, leans heavily upon his existing knowledge and professionalism, the foci for which, is the fundamental realisation of the meaningfulness in the learning experiences of his adult students. For him, the relationship is not complete because of his longing to know all about what is actually there.

Textural-structural description of the meaning and essence of Sean's experience [Table 7]

Sean appreciates the structure that the ALCC offers. He experiences it as a framework that enables him to access and negotiate student progression. For him the ALCC is a tool pack that supports his own practices and belief systems and recognises the proactive efforts that his professionalism calls upon him to make in light of the discrepancies that have been thrown up. What is accessible and tangible to his students, in his experience becomes the factor of affirmation that he seeks in his justification for using a system that he is not fully aware of. Whilst Sean admires and uses effectively some aspects of the curriculum, he recognises that there is an aspect of the curriculum that coerces others to engage in teaching practices that are not concerned with that development of student cognition. This conflict has for Sean meant that he holds firmly onto the student empowering principles and sentiment to ensure their centeredness and ownership. His passionate chastisement in this context becomes inevitability but he has optimism in his cautious longing to experience the ALCC as a whole phenomenon. Sean also senses that this longing is the essence of his commitment to the ALCC in what is already a tentative alliance.

Appendix D

Co-researcher 4: Jasmine

Pen-portrait of the co-researcher:

Jasmine is a forty year old black woman who is of Jamaican descent and whom was born and brought up in the UK. Jasmine has spent most of her professional life in south west London having recently moved from the mainstream secondary sector to FE's discrete sector. Jasmine has been plunged into working as a main-grade lecturer with adult students who have experienced bouts of mental ill health. Most of Jasmine's teaching is offsite in outreach facilities. Jasmine and I have shared an office for the equivalent of one academic year and I have been her workplace mentor to support her to come to terms with various dimensions of her role.

Jasmine is adept at seeking clarity within team meetings and readily responds to sound practical advice that engages with the needs she identifies within her own inexperience of teaching in the FE sector and in coming to terms with the demands of the teaching post.

The conversation / research interview [Table 1]

The following table contains the verbatim transcript of the conversation that took place between the fourth co-researcher, Jasmine and I as a result of asking Jasmine to describe her experience of teaching adult literacy as it relates to the interview question.

S = Sophia [researcher]
J = Jasmine [co-researcher]

J	Umm. Hello. Hi umm, are you going to ask me questions or shall I just talk?
S	We'll just talk. Just tell me what your experiences have been like? What they have been like teaching literacy under the auspices of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum in this college?
J	<p>In this college? I only started work here recently and I have had very, in fact I'm just trying to think have I taught literacy to adults before? And I don't think I have. I've taught drama, umm. I might have done many years ago in the voluntary sector but I don't remember teaching literacy to adults before. All my teaching has been in schools. Umm, perhaps with young adults eighteen, nineteen, twenty, umm and certainly, my main subject is drama. I've taught English but always feel slightly out of my depth with it because it's not my first subject.</p> <p>Teaching literacy in FE has a bit of, too, too. Has been a, a, very, a bit of a learning curve; partly because I've been working with mental health which I've never done before so that has been a major learning curve, but also because, umm, the group that I'm with have such differing needs and, umm, are not, uhh, phew! That's been difficult to find ways to umm, to cope with that in the classroom; to feel as if I'm giving each individual in that classroom the time they need, in fact, I know I don't, and I don't think I'd manage that class without the teaching assistants in there, umm. But once I've started I really have loved it because unlike students, and that's on the whole in secondary schools, and that's all I have to compare it with; they really want to learn, these adults. They're really, their interest is there, their engagement is there. They really engage quickly, if they don't engage they signal it very quickly to me and, umm, I have to think o my feet all the time and I come out immediately thinking: What do I need to bring in next week to engage them in the materials. And it's funny because although I feel I've brought structure for the: how to do a recount; how to do definitions of adjectives, nouns; getting them to use more verbs and nouns and adjectives in their work and, umm, what is the other thing I've done this term? Umm, just speaking and listening skills. They've said that they don't feel as if they haven't learnt anything and I think that as part of the reason it's not that they haven't learnt anything. I feel I've been quite successful actually. I'm going to say that, because their experiences of teaching, umm, were very negative, and their experience of teaching when they were young was someone standing at the front of them in the classroom being quite didactic to them, telling them exactly what to do and not allowing them to think. And teaching, certainly in my experience of teaching now-a-days in schools, and certainly in my subject area there is no right answer. It's very much pupil-student led and your idea is to click into the student; what is the student and what the students like to do, and that, that is what you use if you want them to learn. And also the students that I have, to be absolutely frank, every single one of those students is black and I think because of their schooling history they have a very strong notion that standard English is the way to speak. That patois or any other form of English is negative or in some way does not have so much value. Some of them write in that way as well.</p> <p>Although I accept that they need to write standard English as well a whole lot of other baggage comes in as well. Their lack of self-esteem; they don't take the praise in terms of what they write which is vital and alive and exciting. Umm. They don't see that. It's dismissed. I've actually had students ask me to bring in Dickens and umm, which I can and Thomas Harding. Which I can, and that would may be like, be like the balance for them and I feel like for them that will validate their work a bit more and I'm not sure how to. I have to give that more thought about how to deal with that. I might, I'm really thinking that I ought. Because I love Dickens and Shakespeare, and I think they are just as valid as anything else but maybe what I need to do is bring in that and something else. Like the text of Maya Angelou that they do at school and all the other text that they do as well. Umm, so that. So that respect for their own experiences is not somehow; their feeling that their own experiences has been that, umm, and thinks that. I can't describe it but it's not valued the way they speak or their cultural heritage is in some way not validated.</p> <p>I don't know what else to say</p>
S	That's OK cos I know you've got to go soon so that's absolutely fine. I'm just thinking, you know, that using the Core Curriculum does it have any value? Does that validate their own background?

J	<p>The Core Curriculum. Umm. I mean my experience. I mean I'm still trying to get my head around those big booklets to be absolutely honest, and the worksheet I've given is still new to me because of my history at school. But I have, but I'm going to be honest; I'm overwhelmed with the information there and the way it's written, I don't think helps teachers to organise teaching. Your immediate, my immediate thing now is to go to the website and look at what the government says is a good teaching lesson and, umm, because otherwise I'm going to be there trying to wade through that information. And the way that the course are structured that I'm teaching anyway, you have to put down what you're teaching over the term and umm, my instinct, I think, automatically you're going to go to the curriculum indicators and have a look at what's down here. Oh! I'll think I'll try to teach them this term and tick different boxes just like that. It's a very piecemeal way of doing things. It's not the holistic way of doing things. You're not thinking about the students, what you're trying to do is get them to fit what the government says is the way to do it. And not even towards an exam. It's just, it's just to fit in with some vague notion of what is, what is, umm, the standard literacy level that everyone should be at. And I don't understand it enough; I just know that it does not sit well with me. Although I accept that I don't know enough about literacy to make, even speaking really, I just have to learn and, and, I don't think it fits right with the students who have double blows, not only feeling that they don't write, that they don't write well but have their mental health issues to cope with as well. It just doesn't fit right for them.</p> <p>I don't know what else I could say, just that umm. No, nothing really; just that I really do enjoy teaching literacy and I do feel it's a completely different way of teaching, umm, because, umm, I'm stimulated. Different parts of my brain are firing compared to when I was working with students at school. They fired me in a definitely different way. Umm. Umm. That's it.</p>
S	Would you like to add anything else? I'm aware I haven't participated much.
J	No. I've said it all really.
S	Thank you.

Record of significant statements for the description of the experience [Table 2]

1.	I only started work here recently and I have had very, in fact I'm just trying to think have I taught literacy to adults before?
2.	...but I don't remember teaching literacy to adults before
3.	I've taught English but always feel slightly out of my depth with it because it's not my first subject.

4.	Teaching literacy in FE has a bit of, too, too. Has been a, a, very, a bit of a learning curve; partly because I've been working with mental health which I've never done before so that has been a major learning curve, but also because, umm, the group that I'm with have such differing needs and, umm, are not, uhh, phew! That's been difficult to find ways to umm, to cope with that in the classroom; to feel as if I'm giving each individual in that classroom the time they need, in fact, I know I don't, and I don't think I'd manage that class without the teaching assistants in there, umm. But once I've started I really have loved it because unlike students, and that's on the whole in secondary schools, and that's all I have to compare it with; they really want to learn, these adults. They're really, their interest is there, their engagement is there.
5.	...if they don't engage they signal it very quickly to me and, umm, I have to think o my feet all the time and I come out immediately thinking: What do I need to bring in next week to engage them in the materials.
6.	And it's funny because although I feel I've brought structure for them: how to do a recount; how to do definitions of adjectives, nouns; getting them to use more verbs and nouns and adjectives in their work and, umm, what is the other thing I've done this term? Umm, just speaking and listening skills. They've said that they don't feel as if they haven't learnt anything and I think that as part of the reason it's not that they haven't learnt anything. I feel I've been quite successful actually. I'm going to say that,
7.	And teaching, certainly in my experience of teaching now-a-days in schools, and certainly in my subject area there is no right answer. It's very much pupil-student led and your idea is to click into the student; what is the student and what the students like to do, and that, that is what you use if you want them to learn.
8.	...to be absolutely frank, every single one of those students is black and I think because of their schooling history they have a very strong notion that standard English is the way to speak. That patois or any other form of English is negative or in some way does not have so much value. Some of them write in that way as well.
9.	Although I accept that they need to write standard English as well
10.	...they don't take the praise in terms of what they write which is vital and alive and exciting.
11.	I've actually had students ask me to bring in Dickens and umm, which I can and Thomas Harding. Which I can, and that would may be like, be like the balance for them and I feel like for them that will validate their work a bit more and I'm not sure how to. I have to give that more thought about how to deal with that
12.	I'm really thinking that I ought. Because I love Dickens and Shakespeare, and I think they are just as valid as anything else but maybe what I need to do is bring in that and something else.
13.	The Core Curriculum. Umm. I mean my experience. I mean I'm still trying to get my head around those big booklets to be absolutely honest, and the worksheet I've given is still new to me because of my history at school
14.	I'm overwhelmed with the information there and the way it's written, I don't think helps teachers to organise teaching.
15.	Your immediate, my immediate thing now is to go to the website and look at what the government says is a good teaching lesson and, umm, because otherwise I'm going to be there trying to wade through that information.
16.	...my instinct, I think, automatically you're going to go to the curriculum indicators and have a look at what's down here. Oh! I'll think I'll try to teach them this this term and tick different boxes just like that.

17. It's a very piecemeal way of doing things. It's not the holistic way of doing things
18. It's not the holistic way of doing things.
19. You're not thinking about the students, what you're trying to do is get them to fit what the government says is the way to do it.
20. And not even towards an exam. It's just, it's just to fit in with some vague notion of what is, what is, umm, the standard literacy level that everyone should be at.
21. And I don't understand it enough; I just know that it does not sit well with me.
22. Although I accept that I don't know enough about literacy to make, even speaking really, I just have to learn and, and, I don't think it fits right with the students who have double blows, not only feeling that they don't write, that they don't write well but have their mental health issues to cope with as well.
23. It just doesn't fit right for them.
24. I really do enjoy teaching literacy and I do feel it's a completely different way of teaching, umm, because, umm, I'm stimulated.
25. Different parts of my brain are firing compared to when I was working with students at school. They fired me in a definitely different way.

A list of non-repetitive and non overlapping statements [Table 3]

1. I only started work here recently
2. I don't remember teaching literacy to adults before
3. Teaching literacy in FE has been a bit of...a learning curve; partly because I've been working with mental health
4. ...the group that I'm with have such differing needs... That's been difficult to find ways to umm, to cope with that in the classroom; to feel as if I'm giving each individual in that classroom the time they need, in fact, I know I don't,
5. But once I've started I really have loved it because unlike students, and that's on the whole in secondary schools, and that's all I have to compare it with; they really want to learn, these adults. They're really, their interest is there; their engagement is there.
6. I have to think o my feet all the time and I come out immediately thinking: What do I need to bring in next week to engage them in the materials.
7. I feel I've brought structure
8. They've said that they don't feel as if they haven't learnt anything and I think that as part of the reason it's not that they haven't learnt anything. I feel I've been quite successful actually. I'm going to say that, because their experiences of teaching... were very negative...
9. ...in my experience of teaching now-a-days in schools, and certainly in my subject area there is no right answer.
10. It's very much pupil-student led and your idea is to click into the student; what is the student and what the students like to do, and that, that is what you use if you want them to learn.
11. Although I accept that they need to write standard English as well
12. ...patois or any other form of English is negative or in some way does not have so much value.
13. I'm overwhelmed with the information there and the way it's written, I don't think helps teachers to organise teaching.
14. ...my immediate thing now is to go to the website and look at what the government says is a good teaching lesson and, umm, because otherwise I'm going to be there trying to wade through that information.
15. ...automatically you're going to go to the curriculum indicators and have a look at what's down there...and tick different boxes just like that.
16. It's not the holistic way of doing things.
17. It's just...to fit in with some vague notion of what is...the standard literacy level that everyone should be at.
18. And I don't understand it enough;
19. I just know that it does not sit well with me
20. I don't think it fits right with the students who have double blows, not only feeling that they don't write, that they don't write well but have their mental health issues to cope with as well. It just doesn't fit right for them.
21. I really do enjoy teaching literacy and I do feel it's a completely different way of teaching...because... I'm stimulated. Different parts of my brain are firing

Related and clustered units in themes [Table 4]

Inexperience

- I only started here recently
- I don't remember teaching literacy to adults before
- I've taught English but always feel slightly out of my depth with it
- Teaching literacy in Fe has been...a bit of a learning curve, partly because I am working with mental health which I've never done before.
- ...the group I'm with have such differing needs...and that's been difficult to find ways to... cope with that in the classroom
- ... to feel as if I'm giving each individual in that classroom the time they need, in fact, I know I don't...
- The Core Curriculum... I'm still trying to get my head around those big booklets to be absolutely honest, and the worksheets.
- Although I accept that I don't know enough about literacy...I just have to learn.

I'm overwhelmed with the information there and the way it's written.

Engagement

- But once I've started I really have loved it because unlike students and that's on the whole in secondary schools... they really want to learn these adults
- Their interest is there; their engagement is there
- If they don't engage they signal it very quickly to me and...I have to think on my feet all the time and I come out immediately thinking what do I need to bring in next week?
- And it's funny because although I feel I've brought structure for them...they've said that they don't feel as if they have learnt anything...I feel I've been quite successful actually, I'm going to say that because their experiences of teaching...were very negative
- It's very much pupil-student led and your idea is to click into the student and what the students like to do and that...is what you use if you want them to learn.
- I accept that they need to write Standard English as well...They don't take the praise in terms of what they write which is vital and alive and exciting. They don't see that...
- I've actually had students ask me to bring in Dickens. Which I can, and Thomas Harding. Which I can... and that would may be like the balance for them...I feel that would validate their work a bit more...
- I really do enjoy teaching literacy and I feel it's a completely different way of teaching...I'm stimulated ...Different parts of my brain are firing..

Fitness

- I don't think it helps teachers to organize teaching
 - My immediate thing now is to go to the website and look at what the government says is a good teaching lesson... because otherwise I'm going to be there trying to wade through that information.
 - My instinct, I think, automatically, you're going to go to the curriculum indicators and have a look at what's down there...and tick little boxes just like that
 - It's a very piecemeal way of doing things
 - It's not the holistic way of doing things
 - You're not thinking about the students what you're trying to do is get them to fit what the government says is the way to do it
 - ...it's just to fit in with some vague notion of what is...the standard literacy level that everyone should be at.
 - ...I don't understand it enough, I just know that it does not sit well with me
- ...I don't think it fits right with the students, who have double blows, not only feeling...that they don't write very well but have their mental health issues to cope with as well.

Synthesis of the invariant meaning units into a description of the texture of the experience with verbatim examples [Table 5]

For Jasmine the experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC has been that of undergoing a process of development to manage a professional situation that she could not remember being part of before 'I don't remember teaching literacy to adults before...' But Jasmine has acknowledged her professional inadequacies and the associated discomfort before in terms of teaching a subject that was not the one she had been trained to deliver, 'I taught English but always feel slightly out of my depth with it...' This experience was in a secondary school and being in a comparable position in the FE sector has required within Jasmine an acceptance and openness to learning and to adapting within what is new. 'Teaching literacy in FE has ...been a bit of a learning curve, partly because I've been working with mental health which I've never done before ...the group I'm with have such differing needs and ...that's been difficult to find ways to cope with that in the classroom.' For Jasmine this is coupled with the complexities that the Core Curriculum suggests by its presence; 'The Core Curriculum, I'm still trying to get my head around those big booklets to be absolutely honest...' and there is the added sense of being, '...overwhelmed with the information there and the way it's written...' This does nothing to help Jasmine's cause to get to grips with the actual teaching of adult literacy.

Despite these obvious challenges for Jasmine she has found the experience of teaching adults exhilarating and it has re-awakened within her a masochistic nuance and a naturalistic affinity which serves as the fuel for her desire to learn what is adult literacy and how to teach it in a way that is meaningful and not dismissive of the existing talents of her all black student group with whom she empathises. A situation which is itself new to Jasmine as she also wrestles with the issues of student mental health, low self-esteem and student evaluation that signifies to her '...they don't feel as if they have learnt anything...' This was created by her perception of the students' past experiences of being taught which were '...very negative...'

Her years of teaching have enabled Jasmine to recognise student reaction and she frames this knowledge with '...I feel I've been quite successful actually...' Transferable teaching techniques she learnt within the secondary sector have stood her in good stead with her adult students too, 'It's very much pupil-student led and your idea is to click into the student and what the students like to do and that ...is what you use if you want them to learn.' Jasmine's experience also acknowledges that her adult students do not believe her praise of their efforts: '...they don't take the praise in terms of what they write which is vital, and alive and exciting. They don't see that...' This is a source of conflicting concern for Jasmine, where student anxieties mismatch the hopes Jasmine has. Jasmine wants to be responsive to the expressed needs of students within a culture that encourages students themselves to devalue the richness in their own written and spoken communication systems in their quest to express themselves in Standard English as read within the text of authors who are British, well known, published, and a long time dead: '...and that would may be like be...the balance for them...I feel...that will validate their work a bit more and I'm not sure how to. I'll have to give that more thought about how to deal with that.' Finding that balance and validation is something Jasmine has pledged to continue to pursue. In spite of this conflict, teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC has sparked within Jasmine an excitement that she had not experienced in her teaching career: 'I really do enjoy teaching literacy and I feel it's a completely different way of teaching...I'm stimulated...Different parts of my brain are firing compared to when I was working with students at school.' For Jasmine there is no doubt as to why her cylinders are alight, '...I really have loved it because unlike students...in secondary schools...they really want to learn, these adults.'

Jasmine also expresses her excitement in terms of student engagement, 'Their interest is there; their engagement is there...they really engage quickly...if they don't engage they signal it very quickly to me...I have to think on my feet all the time and I come out immediately thinking what do I need to bring in next week to engage them?' But if excitement is the Ying, the Yang is expressed as indignation at the ALCC's inability to support her organise her own teaching, '...I don't think it helps teachers to organise teaching.' Yet Jasmine is still compelled to engage with the curriculum and has adopted a mode of behaviour that accommodates this: 'My immediate thing now is to go to the website and look at what the government says is a good teaching lesson...because otherwise I'm going to be there trying to wade through that information.' For her there is still a discomfort, a sense of guilt about accessing this information because as she acknowledges: 'You're not thinking about the students; what you're trying to do is get them to fit what the government says is the way to do it...you're going to go to the curriculum indicators and have a look at what's down there, oh! I'll think I'll teach them this this term.' Despite presenting this as her own experience, Jasmine admonishes this behaviour as, '...a very piecemeal way of doing things...not the holistic way of doing things.' Jasmine is torn by her sense of duty to her students, herself and to the vagueness of a curriculum that she perceives as a rhetorical device designed for a purpose that neither she nor her students agreed: 'It's just ...to fit in with some vague notion of what is...the standard literacy level that everyone should be at.'

Accompanying Jasmine's censure of the ALCC comes her admission that her experience is shrouded by a deficient understanding of it as a phenomenon, 'I don't understand it enough; I just know that it does not sit well with me.' She is passionate about where her deepest concerns lay, '...I don't think it fits right for the students, who have double blows, not only feeling...that they don't write very well but have their mental health issues to cope with as well...'

Through approaching the phenomenon from differing philosophical perspectives ('imaginative variation'), a description of how the phenomenon was experienced or 'structures' of the experiences' [Table 6]

The structures that underpin and permeate Jasmine's experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC are expressed in relation to her empathy with her black students and a sense of conflict between duty and appropriacy.

Jasmine is attuned to tackling her inexperience and is guided by the desire not to repeat the negativity that she senses her students had previously experienced in their educational pasts. Her empathy for them stems from Jasmine's core belief that their involvement with literacy should be one that values their existing cognitive strengths and cultural heritage. This is what she identifies with, embraces and understands in a climate that is already made arduous by entanglements that are concerned with reinforcing negative student perceptions of themselves and the delineation of her desire to provide holistic student experiences that she could use as a basis for bargaining with them. Inexperience is Jasmine's bugbear. Inexperience and her own prior experience are coloured for her by a sense of professional duty to a cause that is not her own and one that she feels overwhelmed by whilst simultaneously being guarded against. And one that Jasmine perceives as not appropriate in a context where she is protective of and nurturing of existing but dismissed student talents. Jasmine is resistant to squeezing her students into crevices of conformity, when they clearly do not fit.

The third person that Jasmine presents as her experience is one that denotes suspicion and doubt when she is in pursuit of the ALCC's vernacular. Under the curriculum umbrella she is acutely aware of her own brand of professionalism. Under the curriculum umbrella she recognises how she is at odds with what she gleans from it.

Textural-structural description of the meaning and essence of Jasmine's experience
[Table 7]

A need to be seen to be doing the right thing both as a pedagogue and as an empathic individual has Jasmine overwhelmed but simultaneously exhilarated and enthused. For Jasmine, adult literacy teaching is challenging but its arena is shining and new. However, this sheen is somehow, dulled by the demanding presence of the ALCC. She suspects it requires her to conform without duly respecting what she respects. For Jasmine this is an unacceptable payoff for student engagement but she senses that the curriculum is not offering her or them a choice.

In the emotional mist ever present for Jasmine, glimmers of light emerge that strengthen her resolve. Within her teaching and learning there are successes. With these successes come the acknowledgements that it is hands-on support from others that have enabled her as opposed to the government's incontrovertible dogma contained within the covers of the ALCC.

For Jasmine submitting herself to the inevitability of the curriculum does not bode well with the holism ideal she envisages. As a consequence, she seeks clarity about what this phenomenon expects from her within their relationship.

Appendix E

Co-researcher 5: Zandi

Pen-portrait of the co-researcher:

Zandi is a forty-something year old black woman who was born in Jamaica and came to live in England at an early age and has remained here. Zandi has been teaching for almost a decade and in this current context she has a complex and demanding role that consists of being partly a manager and partly a main-grade lecturer (ratio 0.5:0.5) within the college's discrete provision for students with mental health problems. Since the introduction of the ALCC Zandi has taught adult literacy both in an implicit and embedded capacity within both discrete academic and leisure provision and a specific mainstream vocational programme, respectively, in this south west London institution.

Zandi is particularly adept at supporting her adult students to manage change in the college environment and leads her team and students from the front in relation to remaining calm under pressure with an appropriate deference to get the job done whilst minimising any intrinsic cost.

The conversation /research interview [Table 1]:

The following is a verbatim transcript of an excerpt of a conversation that took place between the co-researcher and I (researcher) when the interview question was posed.

S = Sophia [researcher]

Z = Zandi [co-researcher]

Z	It's been fun in a way because I enjoy teaching literacy. I enjoy, umm, words and working with people, writing and getting their thoughts down and so on. And err, I've had the opportunity to teach literacy at *NVQ 2 (two) level and also basic literacy so that's been very interesting. Umm, basically this year I taught on the outreach class who are about five men and they're at different levels in there on the literacy scales; some were very good with words but not necessarily able to construct sentences correctly, but they liked words; some were constantly fumbling so it was almost holding the pencil and helping them to form ideas for words and so on. So it's been very interesting and often very frustrating, not knowing what to teach, what was relevant. Umm, particularly with the outreach people, they're not working, they're not studying. They were unable to say what exactly they wanted to learn, so, for a large part I was imposing on them what I
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thought they should learn. Sometimes it worked, sometimes I'd come unstuck and I didn't know why. But there was a lot of hassle there, not knowing what to teach; not knowing what was relevant.

I think with literacy. So huge. It's a huge umbrella and finding what is personal or right for that person; what is relevant in their lives, particularly adults, you know. Do they want to know how to make shopping lists? Do they want to know how to read their bills and work out the words, what they mean? Do they want to know to write letters and umm? So that was quite a challenge. Umm. I don't feel I was successful at it for that reason because we weren't able to quite pinpoint what they wanted to learn and what was relevant for them. That was a constant sticking point and I would bring lots of resources and try lots of different strategies and, and it was almost like I was starting over every week. It was difficult to continue where I'd left off from one week to the other because things would have changed in their lives and what I'd planned would not have been relevant. But, by the end of the day, I think even, umm, we read, we read from the newspaper which they enjoyed most of all and that's seems to have been almost hitting the, hitting the nail on the head whenever I bought in newspapers, and we would read the newspapers, taking it in turns; they would read and we would discuss, umm, what the words mean and what it means in that particular context, and how the articles would impact on them so that the reading and discussion provoked a lot of interest. So, I suppose that was quite good and, and it was almost like that was the key. That was quite relevant to them, what's happening now, you know, what's going on in the world. What's happening now? So, that was a lot of the work; that's what we concentrated on.

Umm, with the NVQ, I'm more of less correcting their literacy as we go along because its not a separate, stand alone bit of their course but obviously it underpins everything because they do a lot of reading and understanding and speaking and discussing that's involved in the course. So, that, umm, but we're finding, my colleague and I, the people on the NVQ 3 (three) are writing as they speak and that's proving really difficult for us and just recently we had a moderators meeting and we were looking at the different, umm, units across different courses, different, umm, NVQ courses. And one of my colleagues was saying how she had managed to introduce the technical language into the written work and how it really enriched the work that they were producing and how this particular candidate was feeling quite confident because she was feeling much better with her literacy skills and more able; whilst I found that my candidates were more reluctant to upgrade their literacy skills. They just wanted to produce work as they, as they speak. And because of their lack of confidence, umm, you know, they would not be, yes, they'd be holding the children back and that's very, very worrying for us and it's something we hope to address with the next set of students, the next set of candidates in September. We're hoping to umm, run a stand aside umm, stand alone literacy class to support the bulk of the work because it's very, very worrying umm, that they are not able to use the correct language at this particular level; to demonstrate their skills and enrich their work, you know. And because of that lack of technical language umm, the quality of the work is lacking, you know, it's just lacking.

It's so, it's, it's frustrating because most of the candidates are very competent in their work but when it comes to putting it down on paper they are just not able and that's very worrying indeed. And it's, you know, there was a huge discussion as to whether it was our responsibility to address that full-on or whether their employers would take responsibility at the onset for employing them at their work at the school and if TAs are qualified to meet the needs of the course. But it turns out that the fact that yes, it is our responsibility to address that because at the end of the day we send them out with a level three qualification and people are not going to say: oh, its work based. People are going to see level three and will assume it incorporates literacy and numeracy at that level and you know, and there's all sorts of questions about our sort of competence and our professional status in giving out these and saying: oh yes, these people can operate at this kind of level, when in fact a lot of them have difficulty constructing a grammatically sound sentence, you know. So...

S

How have you found teaching literacy using the Core Curriculum?

Z	<p>Umm, I found it very, very boring; it's very limiting although you know, I am always looking at it for suggestions and it, it doesn't tell you that you must do this, it only tells you suggestions as to, how to, how to umm, develop speaking and listening skills and so on and so on but umm. I think we saw it as a guide and it took a lot of responsibility away from us and we said right, oh lovely, this is a start, you know. We can really start structuring our, our umm, our teaching and, umm, that was umm, really good.</p> <p>Teaching literacy, it was laid out and we could cover speaking and listening, reading, writing, communications. So that was really good but umm, I think once you've used it once you know, I found it a bit, a bit tedious and a bit boring. I can't say why. I suppose it's probably just umm, the text. Because our students are adults this is the difficulty because they're adults, you know, it's difficult, I find, it's difficult working with adults in such a prescribed way, umm, you know. And. I only, I just have to look at, take suggestions from the whole thing and incorporate it and use it with my adults as I see fit. But as a general guide and all that, I think it's good. It's good. But umm, some of the prescribed things are a little bit boring and limiting and, if it means that we're all addressing the same, we're all teaching to the same, the same sort of outcomes you know that's quite good. So I can send my scheme of work and someone else can carry it out for me. I'm. In terms of using it as a document to structure teaching and learning and give ideas I think it's good. I can do my scheme of work and someone else can come and interpret it but I've left a structure not necessarily a standard, but I've left a structure in place and if someone comes in they don't have to start wondering what I'm about here. They can see that I'm working with speaking and listening for half an hour and they could then either use the materials I've got or take from it and use their own resources but, you know, in terms of giving us headings and bullet points and starter points, I think, you know, it's good for that yes, yes. Definitely, it's a tool for me particularly with adults, particularly with adults and you know, and differentiation and individual focus and all that as a tool is good. You just take from it and you respond with your own resources and just deliver it in a way that is right for your group of students.</p> <p>Umm. There's a lot of work that needs to be done with it and you know, I feel disappointed that you know, that we're getting people on courses that are not sound in basic skills you know and we're having to go right back to square one to address all that in order for them to even start accessing the course we shouldn't accept them in the first place, so we're toying with the idea but we are not listening and measuring literacy and numeracy levels. We are measuring people's competencies and their abilities as a TA ultimately and they do the job in the work place, you know, that's the umm, that's NVQs. Assessing people in the work place that was the initial NVQ ethos, you know, umm, but, you know, with the, umm, the measuring of levels against *GCSEs and umm, it stands to reason that people would be saying oh, OK, your NVQ is equivalent to X; and our candidates, once they've completed the NVQ 3 (three) they're wanting to, some of them are wanting to go on to do foundation degrees and so on and so on. So even though we are saying we are assessing competency in the work place, at some stage literacy and numeracy will raise their ugly heads again because it will be staring at them in the face, they will come, they will come up against this barrier. Have you got the required level to access another course? Ultimately, you know, education does stimulate more educational interests and curiosity so, you know, we have, we are obliged to prepare people to become more ambitious in looking at their skills and seeing whether or how they want to use it, you know. We can't just say right, you're qualified now. It stands to reason that they'll want to say: Oh, I wonder if I could do X; I wonder if I could do, access that. So, you know, literacy and numeracy will have to be addressed whether we like it or not. That's all.</p>
S	Thanks

* TA = Teaching Assistants;

* NVQ = National Vocational Qualifications

*GCSE = General Certificate of Secondary Education

Record of significant statements for the description of the experience [Table 2]

1. It's been fun in a way because I enjoy teaching literacy. I enjoy, umm, words and working with people, writing and getting their thoughts down and so on
2. I've had the opportunity to teach literacy at *NVQ 2 (two) level and also basic literacy so that's been very interesting. Umm, basically this year I taught on the outreach class who are about five men and they're at different levels in there on the literacy scales; some were very good with words but not necessarily able to construct sentences correctly, but they liked words; some were constantly fumbling so it was almost holding the pencil and helping them to form ideas for words and so on.
3. So it's been very interesting and often very frustrating, not knowing what to teach, what was relevant
4. ...they were unable to say what exactly they wanted to learn, so, for a large part I was imposing on them what I thought they should learn. Sometimes it worked, sometimes I'd come unstuck and I didn't know why.
5. Do they want to know how to make shopping lists? Do they want to know how to read their bills and work out the words, what they mean? Do they want to know to write letters and umm? So that was quite a challenge
6. Umm. I don't feel I was successful at it for that reason because we weren't able to quite pinpoint what they wanted to learn and what was relevant for them. That was a constant sticking point and I would bring lots of resources and try lots of different strategies and, and it was almost like I was starting over every week. It was difficult to continue where I'd left off from one week to the other because things would have changed in their lives and what I'd planned would not have been relevant.
7. ...we read from the newspaper which they enjoyed most of all and that's seems to have been almost hitting the, hitting the nail on the head whenever I bought in newspapers, and we would read the newspapers, taking it in turns; they would read and we would discuss, umm, what the words mean and what it means in that particular context, and how the articles would impact on them so that the reading and discussion provoked a lot of interest. So, I suppose that was quite good and, and it was almost like that was the key. That was quite relevant to them, what's happening now, you know, what's going on in the world. What's happening now? So, that was a lot of the work; that's what we concentrated on.
8. Umm, with the NVQ, I'm more of less correcting their literacy as we go along because it's not a separate, stand alone bit of their course but obviously it underpins everything because they do a lot of reading and understanding and speaking and discussing that's involved in the course.
9. ...I found that my candidates were more reluctant to upgrade their literacy skills.
10. We're hoping to umm, run a stand aside umm, stand alone literacy class to support the bulk of the work because it's very, very worrying umm, that they are not able to use the correct language at this particular level; to demonstrate their skills and enrich their work, you know. And because of that lack of technical language umm, the quality of the work is lacking, you know, it's just lacking.

<p>11. It's so, it's, it's frustrating because most of the candidates are very competent in their work but when it comes to putting it down on paper they are just not able and that's very worrying indeed. And it's, you know, there was a huge discussion as to whether it was our responsibility to address that full-on or whether their employers would take responsibility at the onset for employing them at their work at the school and if TAs are qualified to meet the needs of the course.</p>
<p>12. But it turns out that the fact that yes, it is our responsibility to address that because at the end of the day we send them out with a level three qualification and people are not going to say: oh, its work based. People are going to see level three and will assume it incorporates literacy and numeracy at that level and you know, and there's all sorts of questions about our sort of competence and our professional status in giving out these and saying: oh yes, these people can operate at this kind of level, when in fact a lot of them have difficulty constructing a grammatically sound sentence, you know. So...</p>
<p>13. Umm, I found it very, very boring; it's very limiting although you know, I am always looking at it for suggestions and it, it doesn't tell you that you must do this, it only tells you suggestions as to, how to, how to umm, develop speaking and listening skills and so on and so on but umm</p>
<p>14. I think we saw it as a guide and it took a lot of responsibility away from us and we said right, oh lovely, this is a start, you know. We can really start structuring our, our umm, our teaching and, umm, that was umm, really good.</p>
<p>15. Teaching literacy, it was laid out and we could cover speaking and listening, reading, writing, communications. So that was really good but umm, I think once you've used it once you know, I found it a bit, a bit tedious and a bit boring. I can't say why. I suppose it's probably just umm, the text.</p>
<p>16. Because our students are adults this is the difficulty because they're adults, you know, it's difficult, I find, its difficult working with adults in such a prescribed way, umm, you know. And. I only, I just have to look at, take suggestions from the whole thing and incorporate it and use it with my adults as I see fit.</p>
<p>17. But as a general guide and all that, I think it's good. It's good.</p>
<p>18. But umm, some of the prescribed things are a little bit boring and limiting and, if it means that we're all addressing the same, we're all teaching to the same, the same sort of outcomes you know that's quite good. So I can send my scheme of work and someone else can carry it out for me.</p>
<p>19. In terms of using it as a document to structure teaching and learning and give ideas I think it's good.</p>
<p>20. I can do my scheme of work and someone else can come and interpret it but I've left a structure not necessarily a standard, but I've left a structure in place and if someone comes in they don't have to start wondering what I'm about here.</p>
<p>21. Definitely, it's a tool for me particularly with adults, particularly with adults and you know, and differentiation and individual focus and all that as a tool is good.</p>
<p>22. You just take from it and you respond with your own resources and just deliver it in a way that is right for your group of students.</p>
<p>23. There's a lot of work that needs to be done with it and you know, I feel disappointed that you know, that we're getting people on courses that are not sound in basic skills you know and we're having to go right back to square one to address all that in order for them to even start accessing the course we shouldn't accept them in the first place, so we're toying with the idea but we are not listening and measuring literacy and numeracy levels.</p>

24. Assessing people in the work place that was the initial NVQ ethos, you know, umm, but, you know, with the, umm, the measuring of levels against *GCSEs and umm, it stands to reason that people would be saying oh, OK, your NVQ is equivalent to X; and our candidates, once they've completed the NVQ 3 (three) they're wanting to, some of them are wanting to go on to do foundation degrees and so on and so on.
25. So even though we are saying we are assessing competency in the work place, at some stage literacy and numeracy will raise their ugly heads again because it will be staring at them in the face, they will come, they will come up against this barrier. Have you got the required level to access another course?
26. Ultimately, you know, education does stimulate more educational interests and curiosity so, you know, we have, we are obliged to prepare people to become more ambitious in looking at their skills and seeing whether or how they want to use it, you know.
27. So, you know, literacy and numeracy will have to be addressed whether we like it or not.

*A list of non-repetitive and non overlapping statements [Table 3]
 These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience*

1. ...I enjoy teaching literacy
2. I've had the opportunity to teach literacy at *NVQ 2 (two) level and also basic literacy...
3. ...this year I taught on the outreach class who are about five men and they're at different levels in there on the literacy scales; some were very good with words but not necessarily able to construct sentences correctly, but they liked words; some were constantly fumbling so it was almost holding the pencil and helping them to form ideas for words and so on.
4. So it's been very interesting and often very frustrating, not knowing what to teach, what was relevant
5. ...they were unable to say what exactly they wanted to learn, so, for a large part I was imposing on them what I thought they should learn. Sometimes it worked, sometimes I'd come unstuck and I didn't know why.
6. ...I would bring lots of resources and try lots of different strategies and, and it was almost like I was starting over every week. It was difficult to continue... because things would have changed in their lives...
7. ...we read from the newspaper which they enjoyed most of all and that's seems to have been almost ...hitting the nail on the head...we would discuss...what the words mean...in that particular context, and how the articles would impact on them so that...provoked a lot of interest....That was quite relevant to them, what's happening now, you know, what's going on in the world...So, that was a lot of the work; that's what we concentrated on.
8. ...with the NVQ, I'm more of less correcting their literacy as we go along because it's not a separate, stand alone bit of their course but obviously it underpins everything...
9. ...I found that my candidates were more reluctant to upgrade their literacy skills

10. ...it's very...worrying...that they are not able to use the correct language at this particular level; to demonstrate their skills and enrich their work, you know. And because of that lack of technical language...the quality of the work is lacking...
11. ...I am always looking at it for suggestions and it...doesn't tell you that you must do this, it only tells you...how to...develop ...skills...
12. I think we saw it as a guide and it took a lot of responsibility away from us and we said right, oh lovely...We can really start structuring...our teaching and...that was...really good.
13. ...I think once you've used it...I found it a bit...tedious and a bit boring. I can't say why. I suppose it's probably just...the text.
14. ...it's difficult working with adults in such a prescribed way...
15. ...we're all addressing the same; we're all teaching to the same...sort of outcomes...
16. I can do my scheme of work and someone else can come and interpret it but I've left a structure not necessarily a standard...in place and if someone comes in they don't have to start wondering what I'm about here.
17. Definitely, it's a tool for me particularly with adults...and differentiation and individual focus and all that...is good.
18. You just take from it and you respond with your own resources and just deliver it in a way that is right for your group of students.
19. There's a lot of work that needs to be done with it...
20. Assessing people in the work place that was the initial NVQ ethos...
21. ...at some stage literacy and numeracy will raise their ugly heads again because it will be staring at them in the face...they will come up against this barrier.
22. Ultimately...education does stimulate more educational interests and curiosity so... we are obliged to prepare people to become more ambitious in looking at their skills and seeing whether or how they want to use it...
23. ...literacy and numeracy will have to be addressed whether we like it or not.

Related and clustered invariant units in themes [Table 4]

Challenges

- ...some were very good with words but not necessarily able to construct sentences correctly, but they liked words; some were constantly fumbling so it was almost holding the pencil and helping them to form ideas for words and so on.
- So it's been very interesting and often very frustrating, not knowing what to teach, what was relevant
- ...they were unable to say what exactly they wanted to learn, so, for a large part I was imposing on them what I thought they should learn. Sometimes it worked, sometimes I'd come unstuck and I didn't know why
- ...I would bring lots of resources and try lots of different strategies and, and it was almost like I was starting over every week. It was difficult to continue... because things would have changed in their lives...
- ...I found that my candidates were more reluctant to upgrade their literacy skills
- ...it's very...worrying...that they are not able to use the correct language at this particular level; to demonstrate their skills and enrich their work, you know. And because of that lack of technical language...the quality of the work is lacking
- ...it's difficult working with adults in such a prescribed way...
- ...I think once you've used it...I found it a bit...tedious and a bit boring.
- There's a lot of work that needs to be done with it...
- ...literacy and numeracy will have to be addressed whether we like it or not.

Ultimately...education does stimulate more educational interests and curiosity so... we are obliged to prepare people to become more ambitious in looking at their skills and seeing whether or how they want to use it...

Relevance

- ...we read from the newspaper which they enjoyed most of all and that's seems to have been almost ...hitting the nail on the head...we would discuss...what the words mean...in that particular context, and how the articles would impact on them so that...provoked a lot of interest....That was quite relevant to them, what's happening now, you know, what's going on in the world...So, that was a lot of the work; that's what we concentrated on. ...with the NVQ, I'm more of less correcting their literacy as we go along because it's not a separate, stand alone bit of their course but obviously it underpins everything...

Guidance

- ...I am always looking at it for suggestions and it...doesn't tell you that you must do this, it only tells you...how to...develop ...skills...
- I think we saw it as a guide and it took a lot of responsibility away from us and we said right, oh lovely... We can really start structuring...our teaching and...that was...really good.
- I think we saw it as a guide and it took a lot of responsibility away from us and we said right, oh lovely... We can really start structuring...our teaching and...that was...really good
- ...we're all addressing the same; we're all teaching to the same...sort of outcomes...
- I can do my scheme of work and someone else can come and interpret it but I've left a structure not necessarily a standard...in place and if someone comes in they don't have to start wondering what I'm about here.
- Definitely, it's a tool for me particularly with adults...and differentiation and individual focus and all that...is good.
- You just take from it and you respond with your own resources and just deliver it in a way that is right for your group of students

Synthesis of the invariant meaning units into a description of the texture of the experience with verbatim examples [Table 5]

The experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC for Zandi is one in which she proclaims *'I enjoy teaching literacy'* and one in which she acknowledges that literacy as a factor of everyday adult life within a FE college *'...underpins everything...'* For her this experience fluctuates between teaching the subject both explicitly and implicitly whilst caught up in a vortex of possibilities where the need to facilitate meaningful student learning experiences in the explicit context weighed heavily upon her: *'So it's been very interesting and often very frustrating, not knowing what to teach, what was relevant.'* This sensation was compounded by the inability of her adult students to contribute suggestions about they wanted to do *'...they're unable to say what exactly they wanted to learn.'* Desperate to deliver but not precisely knowing what to do, Zandi found herself bowing to a pressure that was both self and externally imposed, *'...I would bring lots of resources and try lots of different strategies and... it was almost like I was starting over every week. It was difficult to continue... because things would have changed in their lives...'* For Zandi this bought to bear a situation in which her desires to fulfil her duty as a teaching professional bought forth behaviour that characterised her anxiety at that time, *'for a large part I was imposing on them what I thought they should learn. Sometimes it worked, sometimes I'd come unstuck and I didn't know why'*

It took time for Zandi to successfully become attuned to student need *'...we read from the newspaper which they enjoyed most of all and that's seems to have been almost ...hitting the nail on the head...we would discuss...what the words mean...in that particular context, and how the articles would impact on them.'* Her students showed an interest in the world beyond their own and unequivocally demonstrated to Zandi that this was the basis upon which to proceed to deliver adult literacy to and for them, *'...so that ...provoked a lot of interest...That was quite relevant to them, what's happening now, you know, what's going on in the world...'* So, *that was a lot of the work; that's what we concentrated on.'*

Incorporating the use of the ALCC in her teaching stimulated Zandi in an arena where she perceived the framework as supportive but recognising that there was a cost *'...it's difficult working with adults in such a prescribed way...'* But reason and rationale prevailed for her, *'...I am always looking at it for suggestions and it...doesn't tell you that you must do this, it only tells you...how to...develop ...skills...'* And the rewards were always apparent for Zandi; for her student there was *'...differentiation and individual focus...'* and for herself, *'You just take from it and respond with your own resources and just deliver it...'* Within the veritable list of possibilities Zandi willingly engaged and wanted to be led, *'I think we saw it as a guide.'* And she viewed the consequences positively, *'...it took a lot of responsibility away from us and we said, oh lovely, this is a start...we can really start structuring our teaching...'* The ALCC's patriarchal exuberance in her relationship with it and her stake in the discernable student outcomes raised its profile in Zandi's experience and reduced any sense of isolation *'...we're all addressing the same; we're all teaching the same...sort of outcomes...'* Whilst Zandi recognised these qualities in the ALCC its impact was limited as its presence did not appease a lack of fulfilment that was hers: *'...I think once you've used it...I found it a bit...tedious and a bit boring.'*

Teaching adult literacy as an embedded subject offers Zandi little professional peace; Zandi was imprisoned by the overly ambitious desires of her adult students and the expectations of others in an arena where Zandi charges: *'...my candidates were reluctant to update their skills...'* For Zandi vocation and adult literacy were not readily bedfellows and she recognised that student competence in one did not extenuate competence in the other. The ubiquitous influence of the ALCC was no comfort for Zandi here and in its presence she insisted, *'There's a lot of work that needs to be done with it...'*

Through approaching the phenomenon from differing philosophical perspectives ('imaginative variation') a description of how the phenomenon was experienced or 'structures of the experience' [Table 6]

The structures that underpin and permeate Zandi's experience of teaching adult literacy under the auspices of the ALCC are expressed in relation to the challenges that choice and expectation bring; relevance for the adult recipients of her teaching and the enabling effect of structure and suggestion.

Zandi's experience of the ALCC been characterised by a veritable swirl of happenings. Teaching adult literacy is a place in which for her there is some solace and security that comes from being in a professional paradox buffeted by the presence of the paternalistic ALCC. This is in a paradigm where too much choice exists and challenges arise from the inability to immediately access what it is that will facilitate learner fulfilment and affirmation for her. Relevance is for Zandi's melancholia, the ultimate paragon of adult learning content. She works tirelessly to address student need but conversely she passively embraces the seduction of sameness that she consumes from a curriculum that simultaneously bores and nurtures her. For Zandi the relationship with the ALCC revolves but does not evolve in the way she needs it to in order to glean professional fulfilment.

Textural-structural description of the meaning and essence of Zandi's experience [Table 7]

It's ability to support the structuring of Zandi's teaching is what binds her to the ALCC. The ALCC's presence represents for her a solid platform upon which she can return when trying to grasp at a starting point when they can not be found in within the usual expectant but inarticulate sources. The curriculum is for Zandi a place of safety in the sameness it exudes and for her continuity of practice or theme is the key to the cognitive and prescribed outcomes of adult literacy learning. Teaching under the auspices of the ALCC for Zandi places no feelings of constraint on her professional integrity as she explores and strives for relevance in the adult learning experiences that she projects. Zandi has always enjoyed teaching adult literacy and she is inspired by but made anxious by the challenge of being responsive to the dynamic of student learning need. The presence of the ALCC does not necessarily appease this perception. Its juxtaposition and vernacular do furnish her with some comfort and creates a craving within Zandi for consistency but its presentation renders her underwhelmed in a climate where teacher adaptation is a constant expectation; there is more of the ALCC Zandi needs to uncover.