The 'Changing Faces' study started in January 2002 and aims to track policy initiatives stemming from the 1970 adult literacy campaign to the launch last year of the new basic skills campaign, as part of the National Literacy Strategy. This ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) funded research is a collaboration between Lancaster University, City University and the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education, London. We are using documentary, longitudinal and quantitative data alongside oral history interviews to collect the perspectives of three groups: adults with basic skills needs, practitioners involved in teaching and organising within ABE and ESOL programmes and people involved in making and managing policy in this field.

Our first information gathering exercise was a small survey that was sent to practitioners asking them to tell us of important events and people within ABE and ESOL between 1970 and 2000. From this we are conducting e-mail and face-to-face interviews as well as setting up group activities to collect memories, experiences and views from this period. We are using the four case study sites of Leicestershire, Norfolk, Greater Manchester and East London to look more closely at how these experiences intersect within a specific geographical area.

We have developed a web site where people that fall outside of these areas might like to contribute their experiences and views: making history themselves with the 'Changing Faces' project. To help with this we have developed a Time Line to record significant events, both nationally and regionally, which we are inviting people to visit and add to. In addition there is a web-based interview where people can record and view more detailed accounts of their experiences. A part of the project is setting up an archive of materials from this period; we are asking people to look under the bed and in cupboards for things to donate. With so much new material we could easily lose the old, which will be of interest to future generations.

For more information on how to contact us and to find out more about the project visit us at:

http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/edres/changingfaces
Interview Questions

Content
We felt that you might like to know in advance the type of things that we hope to cover in the interview. We have divided the questions into three broad areas: your personal experience and career, the bigger picture and key moments and people. As you can see we are interested in the relationship between your experience and what was ‘going on out there’; whether as a practitioner or as someone involved in making or managing policy.

In the area of your experience and career we are interested to know when you got involved in ABE/ESOL and why. It would be interesting to know your motivation and relationship to the work. We are also interested to know what you were doing before and what you are doing now. Details of your practice would also be of interest to us, including significant materials, teaching methods and material conditions. Issues of support, training and networks will be relevant, as will working with, or training volunteers. If you were involved in making or managing policy what were you responding to and why? Where there local lobbies or national initiatives that were significant.

In the bigger picture we are interested to know whether people were aware of, or responded, to national, regional or local campaigns. We are interested to know which, if any, media campaigns were useful in your work. Also how did the various agencies, organisations and providers relate to each other? To make this concrete we would be interested in examples of particular initiatives that you may have been involved in.

In the last section, which considers key moments and people, we will ask you to describe your career in decades mentioning significant people, moments and organisations. We will also ask you to identify the high and low points of your career, including things that may have felt successful or difficult, pleasurable or challenging. Has this affected your professional or personal view of literacy and learning now?

There will be time at the end of the interview to mention anything that we have not covered here.
Procedure
Once the interview has been finished we will ask you to fill in a simple consent form. This enables us to check that you understand the overall aims of the project and allows you indicate how we may store and use your information.

The tape of your interview will be initially be typed by a transcriber at the university. The transcription will then be edited by the person who interviewed you and will be returned to you for your comments and corrections. There may be things that we could not hear of have spelled incorrectly that you may want to correct, for example a name, a date or a place. Also, you may wish to reconsider at this point how you want the transcription stored and used. If you have corrections we will amend the transcript and return it to you. If you are happy with the transcription it is yours to keep. There may be additional things that you have thought of since the interview that you may wish to tell us about. Again, you can tell us about this when we make contact with you to check the accuracy of the transcript and that you are happy with how it will be stored and used. You may of course withdraw from the study or indicate that you want special conditions for storage; for example that it is not seen for ten years until after you have retired.

We will get you transcription back to you as soon as we can but you will appreciate that it may take a little time when we are busy. If you want to check progress or want more information please contact Lynne Drake the project administrator who will be able to help. You can contact her at l.drake@lancaster.ac.uk

Thank you for your help and we will keep you informed of the project as it proceeds.
Sample Questions for Practitioners

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE/CAREER

When did you get involved with Adult Literacy / ABE and how? [ENTRY STORY]
What before? What now?
Involvement with Literacy, numeracy or ESOL?
[Dates if possible]
Motivations; why got involved. Political motivation. Did these change?
Can you describe where you have worked? What kind of organizations?
Who did you work with (other tutors, students) Who were they? Why were these others involved?
Where did they come from?
Who managed your work as a volunteer/ tutor? Any contact with other volunteers/tutors?
Training? Support, guidance?
Materials you used? Methods? Induction of new students? A typical session……..
Would you do the same now?
What skills were important to your work:
What resources were significant/important?
What were your aims as an ABE volunteer/tutor? Influences on these?
How did you gauge whether you were making a difference to your students. How did they know if they were progressing?

How would you say you were regard as a volunteer/tutor/organizer? How was your role understood (by you, other staff, by students)
Was important information regularly circulated to you? Were you consulted about changes and decisions that affected the organization of your work?
If you moved from one role to another when and how did this happen?
Have you ever had a management role in ABE?
When and why did you leave basic education?

BIGGER PICTURE

Did you know about the adult literacy campaign at the time[give date]? Did you know what was going on more generally at local/national/regional level?
Have you followed policy and practice developments since then?
How do you keep up-to-date with policy and practice developments?

• Contact with national agencies?
• Media campaigns
• International events?
• Networks you were/are part of?

“There have been many policies recently about ABS. Where do think these have come from and who are the people who create them?” Views about the actors and the policies themselves.

How important a role do you think the media have played? In what ways?[e.g promoting awareness of the need, changing public perceptions teaching through TV, reporting in the press]

Tell me about [an initiative] you were involved in a tutor/volunteer. Was it your own idea or were you asked to do it? By whom? What were you expected to do? How did you respond to this? What difference has it made to the field (learners or staff)

X and Y people have said this about this initiative “QUOTE…….” How would you respond to that?
KEY MOMENTS/TIME LINE

Your career path in decades 1970s 80s 90s

Who or what has been most influential in developing the field of ABE as it stood before the new Skills for Life campaign/as it stands now?

What stands out when you look back at your experience of ABE? Could you identify a key moment (s) what would this be (they be?)

   Key people
   Key moments
   Key organizations

Highs and lows? Good and bad things about being involved  - difficulties, challenges, contradictions, pleasures, satisfactions?
Lasting effects on you, your views, your professional activities?

Effects on how you view your own literacy and educational experiences, attitudes, practices

What do you think the next step will be and why?
Sample Questions for Practitioners

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE/CAREER

Sample Questions for Policy Actors

NB Essential to research policy involvements before interview and to be fully briefed about the details of the policies discussed, including major public documents

Tell me about your work at [……agency]
How did you first get involved with ABE and why?
Motivations: did these change?
Tell me about how [initiative] came about. – pick out several initiatives specifically for each interviewee and repeat sequence of questions as appropriate.
What were you doing at the time of this initiative?
Whose ideas? How promoted/lobbied for? Rationale for development? Who was involved? Who else had an influence on this initiative? Who was most influential?
What response did this initiative receive [from the practitioner field, from students, the general public, other agencies, government]
What happened as a result of this initiative? How did you evaluate this? If successful, what was the key to this?
If not, what lessons learnt from it?
What influence did it have on later developments?
Were there specific national/local or regional impacts?

Overall, what lessons have you learned from your involvement with these initiatives/agencies?
How do you think your role is understood by practitioners/students/general public/media?
Who do you think are the students and potential students of ABE?
How would you sum up the importance of ABE?
In your view, what are the key things about successful learning in ABE?
Do you think that learning can be more successful in certain contexts rather than others? (e.g. workplace, community)
Do you think there are key learning/teaching methods or technologies?

BIGGER PICTURE

What do you think is the scale of need for ABE and has this changed since the 1970’s campaign? If changed, reasons why?

Do you think there are different views among different agencies/gov/the field, different ideas about how things should have moved? If so, how do these get heard/resolved?

Try to get at their view about the policy process? e.g. what could be done to bring policy and practice closer together?

Could you sum up the role you have played in the field of ABE since you entered it?

Involvement with/perceptions of Literacy, numeracy or ESOL?

How important a role do you think the media have played? In what ways?[e.g promoting awareness of the need, changing public perceptions teaching through TV, reporting in the press]

X and Y people have said this about this initiative “QUOTE………..” How would you respond to that?
KEY MOMENTS/TIME LINE

Your career path in decades 1970s 80s 90s

Who or what has been most influential in developing the field of ABE as it stood before the new Skills for Life campaign/as it stands now?

What stands out when you look back at your experience of ABE? Could you identify a key moment (s) what would this be (they be?)

Key people

Key moments

Key organizations

Highs and lows? Good and bad things about being involved - difficulties, challenges, contradictions, pleasures, satisfactions?

What do you think the next step will be and why?

Lasting effects on you, your views, your professional activities?

Effects on how you view your own literacy and educational experiences, attitudes, practices
CHANGING FACES PROJECT - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

Thank the participant for agreeing to be interviewed.

Stress the anonymity of the interview and how long the interview will take to complete.

Ask the participant if it is okay for the interview to be recorded. Explain that it will be much easier than having to write everything down, as it is a more informal interview than those given before. However, stress the information will be treated in the same confidential way as all paper and computer assisted interviews previously conducted.

Outline the structure of the interview:

- Update of current personal situation
- Knowledge of nationwide Literacy or Numeracy Campaigns since the 1970s - The Campaign Timeline
- Knowledge of local Literacy or Numeracy Campaigns
- Formal learning experiences - gaining qualifications, attending evening classes, etc. What methods works best?
- Informal learning techniques - the ways that we all gain information but are largely unrecognised as ‘learning’
- Key moments or individuals over the last 30 years - when, what or who have helped new information or skills be gained - The Personal Timeline
- How ‘learning’ has changed over the years - for example technological developments. Look at participant’s own experiences or those of family members or friends
- Plans for the future

Re-introduce ‘Changing Faces’ project - use the publicity sheet sent out with the initial contact letter.
UPDATE OF CURRENT SITUATION

So, what are you doing at the moment? Have there been any changes to what you are doing since you were last interviewed in 2000 [use specific date]?

Changes to employment
Changes to home life - parents, partner, children, pets
Housing
Health status
Personal interests - leisure pursuits
Voluntary or community involvement
Education
NATIONAL LITERACY OR NUMERACY CAMPAIGNS SINCE THE 1970s

Over the past 30 years, governments have been behind a number of campaigns that promote different aspects of adult education or adult learning opportunities.

Show the 'Campaign Timeline' (if we have one) - a list of the campaigns that have been run, together with the accompanying publicity material to see which - if any - have stayed in their mind.

Which ones are remembered?
Any others?

Was there any particular reason why a certain campaign was remembered?
Was it the 'personality' involved with the campaign or the general advertising that was particularly good?
Was it something they got involved with in some way? Did a friend or family member get involved?
If so, what did they do? Where, when? What was it like? What happened (ie how long did they stay)
At a more local level, have you ever been sent or noticed publicity about adult education or other learning opportunities - i.e. evening classes?

Stress all sorts of education/learning - from part-time degree courses, ACCESS courses, computer/internet skills, arts & crafts (painting, pottery), car maintenance, DIY, basic reading and writing skills, etc, etc.

Think about advertising on the local radio, in local newspapers, magazines, shop-windows, billboards, flyers, posters, etc -

Was there any particular reason why a certain campaign was remembered?
Was a particular 'personality' involved with the campaign or was the general advertising particularly good?
Was it something they got involved with in some way? Did a friend or family member get involved? Make a note of dates mentioned on the 'Personal Timeline'.

Would you know where to go to get information on any courses you may wish to go on, or learning opportunities that you wish to pursue in other ways?

Where is this?
Have you been before?
Was it a good resource?
FORMAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES – ATTENDING EVENING CLASSES, ETC. WHAT METHODS WORKS BEST?

[TWO SHOWCARDS – you would like to study to improve your skills, AND you would like to improve your skills …….to help your children, etc] THESE CAN BE USED DEPENDS ON THE SORT OF QUESTIONS ASKED – DIFFERENT FOR LEARNERS THAN NCDS COHORT MEMBERS.

The set of questions asked depends on what we know about the cohort member from 2000 survey.

Those who want to improve their skills:

In 2000, you said that you would like to improve your READING, WRITING or MATHS Skills. Have you done anything about this yet?

You said that you would like to use ‘X’ way of learning (look up what was said - books at home, computer, evening classes, etc).

You said that you would like to improve these skills because of ‘Y’ (children, work, etc). Is this still the main reason?

Keep the ‘Personal/Popular Timeline’ in front of you and the participant - add in any dates as they come up.

If done something - what? Did you enjoy it/complete it/find it useful? How find it useful - did it lead to other things - more learning, improved self-esteem?

If not done something - why not? What stopped you? Was it a lack of money, the time the ‘course’ was on, too far away, poor transport links, didn’t want to go on own, etc?

Can you think of ways that that would have made it possible for you to attend/learn? Having a crèche, waiting for your children to get older in terms of it coinciding with school times, study leave, etc?

Those who reported they had skills difficulties:

In 2000, you said that you felt you had experienced some level of difficulty with READING, WRITING or MATHS. Is this still the case?
If 'YES', ask

Do you manage your their daily lives ok even though you feel you have some skills difficulties?
What are the specific difficulties you experience? What would help you to manage a bit better?
Do you feel able to do something to help you overcome these difficulties?
Have you done anything to about this yet?

If 'NO', ask

What did you do to overcome these difficulties?
How were you able to overcome these difficulties?
What were the specific difficulties you were experiencing?

Did you enjoy it/complete it/find it useful?
How find it useful - did it lead to other things - more learning, improved self esteem?

Various combinations of the above two sets of questions will be asked depending on what participant answered back in 2000.

For participants with no assessed skills difficulties, who did not want to improve their skills and did not report skills deficits, a more general set of questions will be more suitable.

You have provided a lot of information on education/training experiences over the years. Say what know about them from 2000 in respect to learning, etc. If they have got any qualifications or not, the highest qualification they have got. Say also if received any training or been on other courses.

Have you taken any courses (etc) since you were last interviewed in 2000?

If 'no' - confirm that they have never taken or been on any course since leaving full-time education.

If 'yes' or 'no' but had taken some in 2000, ask
We would like to know a bit more about how you found these learning experiences (or latest/most interesting depending on how many?).

Did you enjoy it/complete it/find it useful?
How find it useful - did it lead to other things - more learning, improved self esteem?
WAYS THAT WE ALL GAIN INFORMATION BUT ARE LARGELY UNRECOGNISED AS ‘LEARNING’

Inside the home

Think about what you have in your home. Which of these - or any other ones that you can think of - do you use?

[SHOWCARD - do you now or have you ever........used writing materials, etc]

What sorts of things do you use them for?
How did you learn how to use them?
For example, what about the video? Did you learn from a member of your family or did you use the instruction manual? Either way, this is what we mean by an informal way of learning and gaining new skills.

Outside the home

Do you ever borrow DVDs or videos from a shop - Blockbusters?
Do you ever buy them for other people?
Do you use a library? If so, what do you use it for? (books or music/videos)?
How do you go about choosing something new? For example, what about a new mobile phone? How decide on the best deal for you?

Finding things out - general information

Where or who would do you go to in your locality to find something out or get information?
Which are you most likely to use or find the most helpful? Or does this depend on what you are trying to find out about?

a) A practical demand - getting ill, finding a new dentist, legal problems, understanding an official letter, working out money problems?
b) Or leisure related - pursuing personal interests - where to go to buy a bike, join a club or enrol on a course.
[SHOWCARD – would you first try to find something out by…asking a friend, etc]

Helping Others

Do you ever write something for other people about the things you know about, or give them information?  
Do people come to you sometimes for advice?  
Are there things you do for other people regularly?  (e.g. looking after animals, DIY, running a catalogue, driving, making things, cooking, drawing cartoons/design)

Weekly Activities

Pulling this information together, think about all the things you do in a typical week that involve reading, writing, using numbers, using a computer, TV or a radio.

Think about the small things you do as an individual - buying a lottery ticket, signing a form at the doctors, picking up a magazine or calculating prices in a shop, send a birthday card.

Think about the activities you do as part of a group they belong to - sports, weight watchers, playgroups, babysitting, brownies or scouts, music, church.

What personal and family records do you keep? Do you make lists, fill in a calendar, use a notice board or keep a diary or photo album? If you don’t do these, does someone else in the family? Who, when and how?
KEY MOMENTS AND PEOPLE

Reintroduce the ‘Popular/Personal Timeline’ - participant or interviewer to add in all personal experiences. Link back to any moments of significant change identified (possibly) at the beginning of the interview when the ‘campaign’ timeline was first introduced. Reiterate that we are interested in “triggers” to learning more generally so that this doesn’t become focused on formal education.

Looking back on your experiences of education, or any new things that you have done, was there a specific reason why or main motivating factor - a “trigger” event? For example, a friend doing it, feel left behind by children, children all at school so had time, out of paid work, employer provided opportunity, etc, etc.

AT SCHOOL - was there a teacher who you had a particularly good rapport with? A friend, older friend or family member who was particularly encouraging?

IN YOUR 20s

First employment, getting married, having children, children starting school, change of career, returning to work, etc, etc (apply to the specific decade when we know these events happened)

IN YOUR 30s

As above

IN YOUR 40s

As above
**CHANGES TO LEARNING**

What do you think are the biggest differences in your education experiences and those of either your children, or children at school today?

[SHOWCARD – examinations and the need for qualifications, etc]

As we discussed earlier, people use reading, writing and number skills in lots of different ways. Do you think that reading, writing and number skills are more or less important now than they were say 20-30 years ago?

[SHOWCARD – work – think of changes in the line of work you do, etc....]

How do you think technology has changed things?
Do you think computers have decreased or increased use of the written word?

Cite some examples of this i.e. telephones seriously reduced the amount of letter writing that went on. However, although some people say handwriting skills have declined, the written word has actually increased in more recent times with the increased use of computers - sending e-mails etc.
FUTURE INTERESTS AND LEARNING

Is there anything (else) that you think you would find useful or interesting to learn more about?

[SHOWCARD - skills around the home DIY, etc......]

If 'yes' to any of the above, ask how they would best like to learn/ get the information

[SHOWCARD - you would like to study to improve your skills ...on s DAYTIME college course, etc......]

Generally speaking, what method of learning have you found works best for you? What method is least suited? Why is this? A need for stimulation from others in classroom, like a teacher. Prefer to learn at own pace - self teach, etc, etc.

Why do you prefer a particular way of communication or technology - look for feelings and values associated with these, especially, literacy and electronic/computer-based technologies

A few other questions......

Have you, or would you like to, receive any sort of qualification or certificate for something you have learned - formally or informally? If you have received any certification in the past, was this important to you or not at all?

Have you ever wanted to learn something but been put off by the cost?

Do you think the government should try to make adult courses accessible to as many people as possible? Should they be free or at least at minimal cost - possibly on a sliding scale?

Thank the participant for agreeing to be interviewed.
CONSENT FORM

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the Changing Faces project. After the interview takes place the tape will be transcribed and a copy will be returned to you. There are several ways in which the tape and transcription may be stored and used. We would like to ask your permission about this and check that you know what your options are. Please circle all that apply.

- I have been informed about the Changing Faces project
- I am happy for the tape of my interview to be stored in the project’s archive at Lancaster University/City University
- I am happy for other researchers to have access to my tape
- Would you like your name to be used on the transcript?
- If NO please indicate a name that we may use
- Are you happy for the transcript to be stored by the Changing Faces Project team at Lancaster University/City University?
- I do not want anyone beside the project team to see it
- I am happy for it to go in the archive for other researchers to see it
- I am happy to have my words used:
  a) on the project web site anonymously
  b) on the project web site with my name
  c) in publications anonymously
  d) in publications with my name on it

Signed: Date:

The ‘Changing Faces’ study ran from January 2002- June 2004. It was an ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) funded research and a collaboration between Lancaster University, City University and the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education, London. The project aimed to identify the key issues and forces that have driven change in the field of Adult Literacy, Language and Numeracy (ALLN) and to represent the perspectives of the main interest groups on these through oral history interviews.

For more information on how to contact us and to find out more about the project visit our website at:
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/edres/changingfaces

NCDS Changing Faces Interviews

We used the large scale longitudinal British birth cohort, the National Child Development Study (NCDS) to explore the relevance of ALLN policy to the lives of people identified as having basic skills needs, many of whom who have not participated in formal education or training provision.

Why NCDS?

NCDS is one of four nationwide birth cohort studies in Britain. Cohort studies are one of the richest resources for the study of human development, following up the same group of people from birth into and through adulthood.
NCDS began in 1958, when data were collected about all the 17,000+ babies born in England, Scotland and Wales in one week of March 1958. As shown in Figure 1, cohort members have since been followed up six times, at ages 7, 11, 16, 23, 33 and 42 to collect data about their health, educational, family, social and economic circumstances. The most recent, seventh follow up is currently being carried out in 2004 when cohort members are now age 46.

NCDS cohort members finished full-time continuous education in 1974. They have thus been exposed to ALLN provision throughout most of the reference period of the Changing Faces project. Just what have they been aware of during this time?
Figure 1: NCDS follow-up studies from 1958-2004

1958
BIRTH

1965
AGE 7

1969
AGE 11

1974
AGE 16

1981
AGE 23

1991
AGE 33

1999/2000
AGE 42

2004
AGE 46

PARENTS

PARENT

PARENTS

PARENTS

SCHOOL

SCHOOL

SCHOOL

SCHOOL

TESTS

TESTS

TESTS

TESTS

MEDICAL

MEDICAL

MEDICAL

MEDICAL

SUBJECT

SUBJECT

SUBJECT

SUBJECT

PARTNER

CHILDREN

SUBJECT

SUBJECT

SUBJECT

SUBJECT

17,414

15,568

15,503

14,761

12,537

11,407

11,419

?

1995 - Age 37

Basic Skills Assessment
(10% sample, n=1714)
Identifying NCDS Cohort Members to interview (1)

To qualify for initial selection, cohort members (CMs) had to have taken part in 1995 (basic skills assessment) and in 2000. This would tell us they would most likely be willing to participate and that we had up-to-date contact details. The next step was to only select those who broadly lived in the 4 target study areas of England: London, East Midlands, Norfolk and the North West.

A total sample of 161 cohort members was identified, all of whom had left school at the minimum age. The sample contained an equal number of men and women and where numbers were great enough to allow further choice, we prioritised men and women who had been directly involved in Adult Literacy or Numeracy provision or were members of a minority ethnic group.

The CMs were then allocated to one of eight groups dependent on three measures of basic skills need: assessed difficulties self-reported difficulties and wish to improve their skills.

**Objective Assessment:** 6% of the cohort who had their functional literacy and numeracy assessed in 1995, when age 37, was identified with severe reading/literacy difficulties, with a further 13% having a poor grasp of literacy. Far more of the cohort had difficulties with numbers – 23% with a very poor grasp of number skill, 25% a poor grasp (Bynner and Parsons, 1997).

**Self-reported difficulties:** In 2000, just 3% of NCDS reported they had reading difficulties, 6% writing difficulties, 5% difficulties with numbers. Such questions have particular value in identifying likely response to new provision offered under the Skills for Life programme. If people do not perceive a difficulty, then clearly the incentive to join classes to improve their skills is missing.

**Wish to improve:** questions on any ambition a CM had to improve their reading, writing or number skills were included for the first time in the 2000 survey. Adults will not attend a course to improve their skills or engage in any other formal or informal learning opportunity if they are not motivated to do so. At age 42, 7% of NCDS wanted to improve their reading, 13% their writing and 28% their grasp of numbers/maths.
Identifying NCDS Cohort Members to interview (2)

Table 1: Summary of groups of cohort members identified for interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties</th>
<th>Self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties</th>
<th>Wish to improve reading, writing skills or maths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
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<td>Group 3</td>
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<td>Group 4</td>
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<td>Group 5</td>
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<td>Group 6</td>
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<td>Group 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The aim was to interview twelve cohort members in each of the eight groups - three in each of the four study areas, London, East Midlands (Leicester), East Anglia (Norwich) and North West (Greater Manchester, Merseyside) and hopefully achieve a balanced male-female ratio.

The first pilot interview took place on 22nd August 2002, the last interview on 30th June 2003. Of the 96 planned interviews, 78 (or 81%) were successfully completed. The overall male-female ratio of the achieved interviews was 53% female. Table 2 gives the distribution of the total identified sample by study area and group.

Table 2: Distribution of total identified sample by Study Area and Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>East Anglia</th>
<th>East Midlands</th>
<th>London / South East</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
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Background Information

Detailed background information on each cohort member interviewed was provided to the interview prior to interview, and later attached to each transcribed interview, ready for analyses. The list of variables used to bring to life the background of the cohort members interviewed was extensive. Information from all rounds of data collection was included. Areas covered:

**Adult information**
- Basic Skills
- Computer Literacy
- Formal Education
- Courses and Training
- Partner and Parent Status
- Employment and Income
- Housing/Car access
- Health and Well-being
- Community & Social Participation

**Childhood Information**
- Cognitive test scores
- Teacher rated cognitive skills
- Teacher rated parental interest
- Parents education and reading practices

Qualitative interviews are often carried out ‘blind’. This helps to minimise the potential bias that could creep into the interview as a result of pre-conceptions held by an interviewer and help each interview to be as similar as possible with each other.

In addition to this, NCDS cohort members are highly valued ‘trained’ respondents. They have provided an enormous amount of rich information in interviews over the years. Cohort members are irreplaceable. If a cohort member is ‘lost’ to the survey, another cannot be recruited to take their place. It is therefore important not to ask cohort members something they have specifically answered before; particularly if it was of a sensitive nature.

It is not that this information was directly referred to during the interview, but it did guide certain areas of the interview. For example, if a CM had or did not have any children, questions about helping with homework or using the DVD player were re-phrased to include friends/family members’ children, and perhaps not laboured upon. If a CM had reported that they had been on training course in the past, but they did not refer to it in the Changing Faces interview, the interviewer would know to stress the question in a different way, etc…..
Outline of the structure of the interview

The semi-structured interviews explored people’s experiences of learning over the (near) thirty year period, including their awareness of publicity and opportunities for ALLN, their attitudes to accreditation and to formal learning both school and adult education, their uses of new technologies, networks of support and intergenerational aspects of these.

- (Re)-introduce ‘Changing Faces’ project using the publicity sheet sent out with the initial contact letter.

- Update CMs current personal situation – what are they doing now? What changes since last interviewed?

- Knowledge of nationwide Literacy or Numeracy Campaigns since the 1970s – The Campaign Timeline

- Knowledge of local Literacy or Numeracy Campaigns

- Formal learning experiences – gaining qualifications, attending evening classes, etc. What methods works best?

- Informal learning techniques – the ways that we all gain information but are largely unrecognised as ‘learning’

- Key moments or individuals over the last 30 years – when, what or who have helped new information or skills be gained – The Personal Timeline

- How ‘learning’ has changed over the years – for example technological developments. Look at participant’s own experiences or those of family members or friends

- (Learning) Plans for the future
(previous) Quantitative findings

Most of the research using birth cohort data has involved using the longitudinal data to identify the antecedents, or predisposing conditions, for basic skills difficulties and the economic and social consequences resulting from them.

Those with functional literacy and numeracy problems were much more likely to be unemployed or characterised by various kinds of disengagement and poor well-being. Moreover their problems typically reflected a stunted educational career related to poor family circumstances and lack of parental interest in and support for educational progress. The education system had clearly failed such children who had entered adult life without the basic competencies and qualifications demanded for effective functioning in a modern industrialised society.

Antecedents

- Poor family background
- Overcrowded living conditions
- Free school meals
- Parents not reading to child and
- Parents not interested in child’s education
- Poor acquisition of cognitive skills
- Poor Examination performance/qualifications

Consequences

- Few, if any, qualifications
- Poor labour market experience
- Unemployment (repeated spells)
- No work-related training
- Unskilled casual jobs
- Low income households
- Poor housing conditions
- Having (a number of) children by an early age
- Low self-esteem and symptoms of depression
- Low rates of social and community participation
- Increased prevalence of trouble with the law
The Skills Paradox: relationship between assessed difficulties, self-reported difficulties and a wish to improve skills, as revealed through quantitative surveys

In terms of ‘take-up’ of ALLN provision, few adults objectively identified with difficulties from the functional literacy and numeracy assessments acknowledged these difficulties or expressed a desire to improve their skills. Why is this?

Among the 6% with a very poor grasp of literacy,

- 7% thought they had reading difficulties
- 19% writing difficulties
- 19% wanted to improve their reading
- 20% wanted to improve their writing

Among the 23% with a very poor grasp of numeracy,

- 5% felt they would have difficulties knowing if they were given the right amount of change from a £5 or £10 in a shop
- 33% wanted to improve their number-work skills

The clear advantage of quantitative survey methods is their objectivity and generalisability. However, they do not reveal the realities in the ways individuals manage their lives, make sense of it and maintain its quality. Just why aren’t the poor skills perceived as a problem? For this, the rich detail obtained from qualitative methods hold the key.
Qualitative insights: what did the interviews reveal?

Some people concur that their literacy and numeracy skills are inadequate but are not interested in taking part in courses. Why?

There is evidence (supported by findings presented in Schuller et al 2004) that in later life people reach a working compromise between their ambitions and their actual lives, a phenomenon which has been called ‘settlement’. This does not always imply living on the margins in terms of wealth. People have support systems (family, friends) and also deep identities built around the experience of exclusion. Being asked to challenge that ‘settlement’ may be seen as threatening and too risky, given past experiences of education. An interviewee who “can’t be bothered” to go back to formal learning also says of his schooling “they couldn’t be bothered with me”.

How do we explain the differences between self and external assessment of basic skill need?

Sometimes people describe clear limitations in terms of basic skills, but their lives are lived where many aspects of literacy and numeracy are either irrelevant (particularly in routine employment) or so embedded in everyday activities that people are not aware of them as such – any difficulties or limitations they have are attributed to other things. In the case, for example, where limited literacy or numeracy is associated with a complex of other factors, such as health or long-term disability, this presents much more salient constraints on people including key limitations on their employment opportunities and their ability to participate regularly in educational activities. Sometimes we discovered a history which suggested that as children whose teachers’ rated them as quite competent under-performed on tests for a number of reasons which affected the subsequent maintenance of basic skills.

Interviewees might state they had low levels of skill but still not see publicity as targeted at them.

Though not remembered by all, “On the Move” was the most remembered of the publicity material used in the interview! Many were very interested to see Bob Hoskins with hair! Very few knew of any locally based ALLN campaigns, but most guessed that the information would be available from the ‘local college’ if someone wanted to go on a course. Few were aware of having received information through the mail / leaflets in free newspapers.

An overriding message was that ALLN would be good for people who need it, but that few individuals felt they applied to them. The yardsticks of personal efficacy in everyday life are more subtle and multi-faceted than educational assessments; they are embedded in social relationships, complementary abilities and personal qualities and when things go wrong, there are many potential causes of this too.
Is accreditation important?

Adults who had not gained formal qualifications and/or training certificates, etc, from school or work were far more interested in receiving accreditation for any future learning they may engage in than adults who had gained qualifications – they wanted recognition of their involvement/achievement.

How best to learn?

Individuals held very clear views about their preferences for the organizational context of learning. Most knew the best ways/methods/environment that would help them to learn new skills and information.

The majority were very ‘blank’ when asked about informal learning experiences. Even when given clear examples, there was a reluctance to see that these experiences counted. It seemed that little value was attached to learning unless it had been conducted within a formal space – recognised/valued by wider society?

Role model / mentor?

Teachers were the most remembered ‘role model’. Strong views were expressed, though just as many negative as positive! Much information was given on the attitudinal and emotional legacies of previous school experiences and different attributions of failure.

Does education differ today?

Most (parents) thought education / school was more diverse and interesting than their own time at school – whether they had enjoyed school or not. However, an overwhelming view was that ‘pressures’ - to pass exams, amount of homework, etc – had increased.

Should ALLN be free?

There was a varied response to whether adult education should be free, on a sliding scale, etc. However, there was an overriding view that ALLN courses should be free, just as ICT courses were. In fact, if there was one piece of education information that all CMs were aware of in some way - were locally run ICT courses.
What coping mechanisms were employed?

Individuals draw upon the other/complementary skills of a network of people in their lives

- Partner – do paperwork, manage bills
- Children/teenagers – particularly for new innovations (DVD, Sky+, etc)
- Friends – read official letters, etc

What problems can emerge with social change

- Helping children with schoolwork: both as a parent and grandparent
- Excluded from ICT/other developments
- Employment opportunities: new requirements in the workplace that demand increased competence in literacy and numeracy e.g. attendance on health and safety regulations course.
Summary of Group Definitions

**Group 1** - Assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties, self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties, no wish to improve reading, writing skills or maths.

**Group 2** - Assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties, self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties, wish to improve reading, writing or maths.

**Group 3** - No assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties, self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties, no wish to improve reading, writing or maths.

**Group 4** - No assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties, self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties, wish to improve reading, writing or maths.

**Group 5** - Assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties, no self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties, no wish to improve reading, writing or maths.

**Group 6** - Assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties, no self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties, wish to improve reading, writing or maths.

**Group 7** - No assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties, no self-reported difficulties with reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar, no wish to improve reading, writing or maths. (Excludes cohort members with qualifications above A'level or NVQ3 equivalent).

**Group 8** - No assessed with literacy or numeracy difficulties, no self-reported difficulties with reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar, wish to improve reading, writing or maths. (Excludes cohort members with qualifications above A'level or NVQ3 equivalent).
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* South East used to 'expand' numbers in other groups i.e. an extension to Greater London. Did not include South East in group 7 or group 8 as enough cohort members in 4 original chosen regions.
Summary of Findings
From Adult Literacy Campaign to Basic Skills Provision: A Policy Analysis

This project aimed to identify the key issues and forces that have driven change in the field of Adult Literacy, Language and Numeracy (ALLN) and to represent the perspectives of the main interest groups on these through oral history interviews. It has approached ALLN as a key case study of change in post-16 provision in England and Wales, situating the UK experience in an international context.

It has tracked policy initiatives from the 1970s adult literacy campaign to the launch of the present Skills for Life campaign, collecting documentary and statistical evidence, and carrying out 200 oral history interviews with decision-makers in a range of government and national agencies, practitioners engaged in teaching and organizing within (ALLN) programmes and adults with basic skills needs. We used the National Child Development Survey cohort to explore the relevance of ALLN policy to the lives of people identified as having basic skills needs, many of whom who have not participated in formal education or training provision.

The world of Adult Literacy, Language and Numeracy education is complex. People who work in the field are not a homogenous group. Neither are the learners. We have created an account that demonstrates this diversity.

We use a social practice framework that emphasises the uses, meanings and values of reading, writing and numeracy in everyday activities, and the social relationships and institutions within which literacy is embedded. This framework leads us to view the three interest groups of policy actors, practitioners and learners as overlapping but disparate communities who will relate to the policy initiatives in different ways. It enables us to compare policy with everyday practice, both within and outside of educational settings. We use critical discourse analysis to examine changes in the ways in which policy and practice are spoken about (policy discourses). These changes reflect shifting relationships in the field between different actors. Our analysis shows how literacy and numeracy have been framed at different points in time, how learners, teachers, the learning process and the institutional context are represented.

FINDINGS

1. We have produced an account of how the field of ALLN has changed during the period 1970-2000 creating a set of themed timelines against which to calibrate individual accounts and trajectories and to locate developments in ALLN in their broader social policy context (local, national and international). These timelines have enabled us to identify key moments and four policy phases during this time characterised by shifting power between the different agencies in the field and to document the shifting boundaries and definitions of the field in relation to specific initiatives that have organised it.

2. We have identified the primary “change forces” during each of the four policy phases and examined how each of these have impacted at different
points as the field developed. Considered for much of this time to be a marginal aspect of further and adult education ALLN has been affected by other, more powerful overlapping social projects such as policy for unemployment, immigration or broader reforms in post-16 education and training. It was only with the Moser review and Skills for Life at the end of the 1990s that a co-ordinated national strategy was specifically designed to promote change in the field, closely aligned with other social policy priorities. During the first period media and campaigning pressure groups were clear drivers of change. The initiative was carried forward by volunteer tutors and Local Education Authorities (LEA) responses were very varied. In the second phase, the LEAs and a national development agency, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills agency (ALBSU) were prominent. Local authorities lost their power as a result of broader political changes during the 1980s, and after the legislative changes of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, further education colleges became major players while the national agency became increasingly involved with quality control.

3. **We have identified a set of enduring tensions that have had to be managed by policy actors, practitioners and learners during this period.** We have tracked the way people have responded to and developed strategies related to these tensions across the period of our study. Some of these tensions were created by the outside forces that impacted on it at particular moments, such as marketisation. Some reflect enduring struggles. For example, issues of professionalisation are especially contentious in a field that has been built largely on a volunteer and part-time hourly paid workforce. Responding to diverse adult learners whilst satisfying demands for accountability in a mainstreamed, publicly funded service is a constant challenge.

4. **We have used the resources of a large-scale data set, the National Child Development Study (NCDS), to illuminate the attitudes and aspirations of non-participant adults in relation to ALLN.** We used existing background information to design a carefully structured sample of adults from the NCDS cohort and completed 78 interviews. The interviews explored people’s experiences of learning over the thirty year period, including their awareness of publicity and opportunities for ALLN, their attitudes to accreditation and to formal learning both school and adult education, their uses of new technologies, networks of support and intergenerational aspects of these.

Some people concur that their literacy and numeracy skills are inadequate but are still uninterested in taking part in courses. Our data suggest that in later life many people reach a working compromise between their ambitions and their actual lives. People build support systems, financial security and also deep identities built around the experience of exclusion. Being asked to challenge that ‘settlement’ may be experienced as disruptive and too risky, given past experiences of educational exclusion. Basic skills are not salient, particularly in routine employment, or they are so much part of everyday activities that people are unaware of them and any difficulties or limitations they experienced are attributed to other constraints, such as health problems. The yardsticks of personal efficacy in everyday life are more subtle and multi-
faceted than educational assessments, embedded as they are in reciprocal social relationships, complementary abilities and personal qualities.

5. **We have created an archive of material that can be used by future participants and researchers in the field.** We have captured rich and inflected stories from three main stakeholder groups in ALLN across a crucial period of social change. These new data have been archived for future researchers and participants in ALLN. We have catalogued and archived the interviews and 50 boxes of documentary evidence to be housed at Lancaster University with open access through a web interface. A record of the project, its methodology and findings is also contained on our website and this will be maintained and developed beyond the end of the funded project.

These achievements can offer the field understandings of its origins, help illuminate present dilemmas and identify what still needs to be done to effectively support adult learners, practitioners and managers.
Full Report
From Adult Literacy Campaign to Basic Skills Provision: A Policy Analysis

Background

Our project has covered the period from the adult literacy campaign of the early 1970s to the launch of the Skills for Life Campaign at the end of the 1990s. The original literacy campaign, Right to Read, was well documented (Charnley and Jones, 1978; Hargreaves, 1980) and since then some limited historical reviews have been published, notably Withnall, 1994; Street, 1995; Hamilton, 1996; Hamilton and Merrifield, 1999. Whilst some monitoring figures were kept by national agencies, the statistical record of the field is extremely patchy. Estimates of need have risen from 2 million in the original “Right to Read” campaign (see BAS 1974, p. 4) to the 7 million based on UK cohort studies (Bynner & Parsons, 1997) and the International Adult Literacy Survey (OECD 1997, 2000).

Before the Right to Read Campaign, Adult Literacy was barely recognised as an area for public policy and funding. Just 5,000 adults were estimated to be receiving help with reading and writing in England and Wales (Haviland 1972). There was no legitimising research or body of good practice. There were precursors in self-help and working class education movements of the 19th century. Since 1948, UNESCO had promoted adult literacy in developing countries without formal schooling systems. The British army had engaged in basic education since wartime conscription. Practitioners recruited through the Right to Read campaign drew on the resources and discourses they were familiar with from their previous experience (especially in primary and special needs education and – in the case of ESOL – from the field of teaching English as a foreign language.) They adapted these resources to invent a new field of practice, which has gradually gained in status and legitimation across the period we have studied. With legitimation comes mainstreaming, standardisation and formalisation of the service. This trend has accelerated rapidly under the Skills for Life Strategy since 2000.

A national development agency provided visibility and leadership but for much of the period there was little that could properly be called “national policy” directed specifically at adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL. This meant that developments largely depended either on LEA policies and the work of local activists or on other national (or European) social policy initiatives that filled the lacuna of ALLN policy. In a marginalised field not used to large funding, practitioners and policy actors have had to look to other social projects and sources of funding. The social policy initiatives of special relevance to the development of ALLN have been:

- Educational reform in the school and post-compulsory education and training sectors
- Economic policy and especially the management of unemployment in relation to this
- Immigration policy and related issues of language policy, citizenship and national identity
- Changes in special educational needs and equal opportunities policies more generally in relation to ethnicity, gender and disability
In international terms the main agencies have been UNESCO, the European Union (especially the European Social Fund) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Developments in the US have been influential, and Australia’s Language and Literacy Policies of the 1990s presented a counterpoint to the more piecemeal developments in the UK during that time (Lo Bianco and Freebody, 1997).

We are analysing a complex field in relation to policy, organizational change and an emerging practice which is located in a much wider arena of social action. We have used different frameworks of analysis to do justice to this complexity:

- Time is a central organizing framework, juxtaposing the public with the personal and more local timelines
- Location is also important, analysing developments from an international, national, regional, local perspective
- Individual life histories of “trajectories” for people or organisations.
- Key moments that people mention are moments of tension or conflict that crystallise bigger underlying issues and we have found it particularly useful to focus on these, and the ways they have been managed.
- There are a number of recognisable and competing discourses in the field and we use Critical Discourse Analysis to explore a set of common underlying issues: how different social actors have viewed learners, tutors, policy actors, the teaching and learning process, institutional contexts, and the goals of the field.

The study is underpinned by a situated social practice view of literacy and learning that enables us to interrogate and link literacy-related activities in the contexts of policy, educational practice and everyday practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Holland and Lave, 2001). It draws on insights from actor network theory (Law, 1994) in seeing ALLN as a “social project” in the process of being formed and identifying how actors and resources are mobilised to ‘solidify’ it. The emphasis is on policy flux and permeability in relation to other competing or complementary social projects. We also use notions of policy networks (Yeatman, 1998), discursive communities (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2001) and governmentality (Newman, 2001), seeing the three stakeholder groups as overlapping communities of practice working within a changing political environment.

Because of the nature, and lack, of national policy initiatives at different points during this history we searched for a long time for an appropriate approach to policy analysis and have adopted a “deliberative policy analysis” (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003) deriving from earlier approaches including Fisher and Forester, 1993 (the argumentative turn), Hogwood and Gunn, 1984 (policy-making in the real world) and Ball, 1990 (policy as both text and context). Deliberative policy analysis enables us to examine the role of dispersed networks and non-institutionalised policy activism; the dialectical and discoursal nature of policy formation and development, assuming value pluralism and identifying social interaction as a means of managing the enduring tensions that policy has to resolve into action; and to acknowledge the importance of everyday social practice in the accomplishment of policy.
Objectives

We set out the following objectives in the original proposal and all have been successfully met.

- **To identify and describe key changes in policy and practice 1970-1999**
  We have assembled detailed timelines based on published sources and personal accounts. We have identified key moments within four broad policy phases and analysed the change forces at work and long-standing tensions in the field have been managed at different points.

- **To bring together perspectives of key stakeholder groups to illuminate relationship between policy process and practice in the field**
  We have collected extensive data with which to analyse these relationships. We found that the “stakeholder groups” are in practice less distinct than we described them in the proposal – people frequently cross between the roles of practitioner and policy actor in the course of their careers; “policy actors” work at many different points within the system of education and training – national, regional and local. Where policy is absent or drifting it is the choices made in day to day practice which can influence change. We have collected many examples of student writing which could be analysed for the interplay between teaching practices and learners’ outcomes.

- **To explain the high level of non-participation in ABE and the difference between self and external assessment of basic skill need using a theory of literacy and numeracy as socio-cultural practice.**
  We chose a carefully structured sample from adults in the NCDS and successfully carried out 78 semi-structured interviews with them in their homes. The interviews explored people’s experiences of learning over the thirty year period, including their awareness of publicity and opportunities for ALLN, attitudes to accreditation and to formal learning both in school and adult education, new technologies networks of support and intergenerational aspects of this.

- **To create an archive recording a specific policy initiative spanning the last 30 years using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data sources**
  People we interviewed have been generous in donating materials including teaching and training materials, books of student writing, videos and photographs to policy documents, reports and statistics from local programmes. We obtained extra funding from the NRDC to help catalogue more than 50 boxes of material on-line and we have arranged for it to be housed in the Lancaster University library.
Methods

We carried out 194 interviews across our three stakeholder groups, practitioners, policy actors and adult learners. In the first stage of the project we identified key moments, people and organizations using a national sample survey to publicise the project and to invite suggestions from the field. We also devised alternative ways for people to contribute, such as group, web and e-mail interviews. We created a website which will be maintained and developed as a record of the project and its methodology.

[See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/projects/edres/changingfaces/methods.htm]

To generate more contextual depth, we clustered the fieldwork into four case study areas (Norfolk, Leicestershire, Manchester and North East London). These were selected to provide a range of activity and geographical spread. Each case study generated information on the regional implementation of national policy, and on the more micro level of policy creation and implementation. Between 15 and 27 interviews have been conducted in each case study area, plus a further sample of 34 key national figures. The sampling of interviews with the NCDS respondents were clustered around these four areas.

NCDS Interviews We used an innovative mixed methods strategy to make new use of and to link findings from a large-scale data set to qualitative life history interviews. We selected a stratified sample of 100 adults from the NCDS cohort, divided into eight different groups based individuals’ assessed basic skills, their own perceived skills and desire to improve them. The sample contained an equal number of men and women and where numbers were great enough to allow further choice, we prioritised men and women who had been directly involved in Adult Literacy or Numeracy or were members of a minority ethnic group. 78 interviews were finally carried out. [See Appendix 1 and our website for full details.]

Data Preparation and Analysis All interviews were transcribed, and returned to interviewees for comment. We devised a discourse analysis strategy using methods drawn from Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2001; and Sanguinetti, 1999, applied across all the interviews and other documents. The research team were trained to use Atlas-ti, a qualitative data analysis software package and we collectively developed a coding system which was trialled on a small sample of our data to begin with. We have interrogated our data through identifying claims from the literature and grounding our responses to this from the data – a grounded but also hypothetico-deductive approach. We believe this strategy could be used as a model for other research teams.

We have developed a “timeline” of events and people (available on our website) that is an important reference point for the materials we are assembling, enabling us to calibrate personal and local accounts against national public records and key policy documents. We have a general timeline covering key events, and specialist timelines covering, for example, the history of key agencies, such as the Basic Skills Agency, events relating to the professionalisation of the field, media campaigns; and events specific to ESOL.
Results

The historical period covered in this project starts in the early 1970s with the end of the “post-war settlement” in education and social policy, a time of widespread progressive social change and civil rights movements, but also the period when the UK finally joined the European Community. It includes the IMF crisis of 1976, just as the adult literacy campaign was gathering momentum and educational policy was taking a decisive turn towards a modernistic vocationalism under the Labour government of Callaghan; it follows the acceleration of vocationalism in the Conservative era together with the rise of marketisation of the education system and the cultural restorationists who attacked progressive educational theories of the 1960s and 70s and desire to restore traditional English cultural values in order to maintain a coherent and narrow view of national identity. As Jones (2003) and others have noted, these tendencies did not always result in coherent policies, but produced conflicting pressures on the educational system, for example those of responding to the need to offer diversity and choice whilst working with strong centralised control.

We follow the development of ALLN throughout the subsequent period of Conservative government into the era of New Labour and the development of the Skills for Life Strategy – the nearest that ALLN has come to a policy initiative specifically targeted for the field. We show how New Labour retained Conservative commitments to vocationalism and free-market driven systems within education, whilst sharply intensifying the managerialist culture. A new emphasis on social inclusion brought literacy and numeracy – including adult literacy as part of lifelong learning – to the centre of social policy. Changed views of citizenship as a combination of rights and responsibilities have shaped the social relations between “learners” and “providers” so that the official discourses have not returned to the notions of equality and entitlement that underpinned the original Right to Read campaign.

The effects on ALLN of policy neglect, coupled with initiatives in adjacent areas, were confusing and sometimes devastating for particular kinds of programmes. For example, cuts in Local Authority funding and the introduction of internal markets to public services disrupted the vulnerable area of literacy provision. Sometimes changes presented welcome opportunities for additional funding and work in areas of urgent need, as in the expansion of courses for unemployed adults, women and migrant groups. Practitioners were resourceful and energetic in corralling diverse kinds of funding to support their core work. They used funds from adjacent areas where there was active policy and money – such as vocational training, the management of unemployment and European funds. They often refer to this survival strategy as “working in the cracks” and although it was experienced as stressful because highly uncertain, it did offer people in marginalized and insecure employment positions some power to shape their work.

Four Key Phases

We have identified four policy phases, characterised by shifting power between different agencies. We can detect connections between the developments in the field described to us and broader political and cultural changes, national and international. For example, debates and conflicts about the marketisation and vocationalisation of...
education are key moments of change which are detected in the multiple responses described by our informants.

**Mid 1970s: Literacy Campaign led by a coalition of voluntary agencies with a powerful media partner, the BBC.** Advocacy by individual members of the government successfully exploited an interest in adult education for disadvantaged adults, opened up by the publication of the Russell Report in 1973 and £1 million was released to set up a national resource agency and to increase LEA provision (Fowler, 1988). LEAs and the adult education establishment, including the National Institute of Adult Education were enrolled in the campaign along with thousands of volunteer tutors and adult learners who began to work in 1:1 home tuition, or in small groups with paid part-time teachers. By 1976 15,000 adults were receiving tuition across England and Wales.

**1980s: Provision developed substantially, supported by Local Education Authority Adult Education Services and voluntary organizations, with leadership, training and development funding from a national agency (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Agency, ALBSU, later the Basic Skills Agency, BSA).** In 1980 the field was expanded to include numeracy and became known as Adult Basic Education. In 1984, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) was added to ALBSU’s remit and an uneasy relationship developed. ESOL had different origins stretching back into the 1960s. It drew on a different set of funding arrangements via the Home Office “Section 11” funding and a more specialised and better organized professional group. ALBSU’s role as a central voice, presenting a public image of the field both to government and the general public was crucial in providing coherence to the expanding field of ALLN and was uncontested on the national scene. By 1985 ALBSU estimated 110,000 adults to be receiving tuition and programmes were drawing on additional funding from the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and the European Social Fund.

**1989 – 1998: Depletion of LEA funding and control, statutory status of ALLN through a more formalized further education (FE) system, dependent on funding through a national funding body.** Although the 1988 Education Reform Act was arguably the most important piece of educational legislation during this period, it was the 1992 F/HE Act that most affected the future shape of ALLN. ALBSU seized the opportunity to get basic skills (already designated as an area of provision in its own right) included in Schedule 2, to make it eligible for funding within the array of vocational courses included in FE Colleges. This changed the statutory status of ABE. It became a mandatory form of provision with a new scope and goals. ALLN was no longer open-ended and community-focussed, but subjected to a funding regime that stressed vocational outcomes and required formal audit. In 1995-6 ALBSU reported that 319,402 people were receiving tuition in England, two thirds of whom were studying in the FE sector.

**1998- present: Development of Skills for Life policy: New government strategy unit created, £1.5 billion of government money is committed.** Literacy and numeracy, including adult literacy, move to a pivotal position in discourses about human resources development and social inclusion. Basic skills are claimed to be crucial for employment, personal, family, citizenship and community
participation (UNESCO, 1997; BSA, 1999; OECD, 1997, 2000). A new funding agency for post-school education and training, the Learning Skills Council, is created; local Strategic Partnerships are encouraged to develop collaboration as a way of overcoming the competitive approach created under the previous funding regime. Core curricula for literacy, numeracy and ESOL, standards, a national test and new qualifications for learners and tutors are introduced in England. Targets are set to reach 750,000 adults by 2004.

**Change Forces**

We have identified the primary “change forces” during each of the four policy phases and examined how important each of these have been at different points as the field developed. They are:

- Campaigning groups /advocacy involving stakeholder groups including employers, Trade Unions, government based “champions”; practitioner and learner-led networks
- Media mobilisation has been a pervasive feature of the field throughout the period of our study, both at national and local level
- National policy changes in adjacent domains as listed above
- Research evidence hardly existed at the start of the 1970s but quantitative estimates of need and benefit had become a major part of the policy rhetoric by the time of the Moser review
- Globalised goals of international agencies, mediated by national policy
- Strategic vision and influence of national agencies, such as the Basic Skills Agency
- Tools of government regulation such as funding methodologies, structures of consultation & decision-making, discourses; legislation, audit, performance indicators, tests and accreditation
- Diverse funding sources

Whilst pressure groups and the national media were important in the 1970s, the LEAs and a national development agency, ALBSU took over the role of change agents in the 1980s. LEAs lost their power as a result of broader political changes, and after the 1992 F/HE Act, further education colleges became major players while the ALBSU (later the BSA) took on more of a quality control function. Considered for much of this time to be a marginal aspect of further and adult education, ALLN has been affected by other, more powerful overlapping social projects such as policy for unemployment, immigration or post-16 reform generally. It was only with the advent of the Moser review in and Skills for Life policy at the end of the 1990s that a co-ordinated national strategy was specifically designed to promote change in the field.
Enduring Tensions

From the timelines and the accompanying stories we have identified a number of enduring tensions which have had to be managed by policy actors, practitioners and learners alike and shown how these are exemplified in local contentious practice (Holland and Lave, 2001). We have re-framed the idea of disjunctures between policy and practice to think more in terms of these long-term tensions and how the different stakeholder groups manage them from their own lived experience and understandings. We used our social practice perspective and a “deliberative policy analysis” to interrogate this idea. The gaps we expected to find between policy and practice we now understand as being more complex issues of local versus national awareness of policy. Policy is typically apprehended in extremely local ways, not only by learners and practitioners, but also by many policy actors who necessarily move in limited circles and refer to selected publications and sources of evidence. We have clear examples of national policy impacting forcefully on local contexts and on individuals, especially in the late 1980s/early 90s with introduction of a contract culture and incorporation of the further education colleges. Global influences are detectable in the introduction of performance indicators and other measures of outcome required by funding mechanisms. These governing technologies come with their own discourses and social relations, re-organizing teachers’ (and managers’) work and learners’ experience of learning. During the 1980s, ALBSU through its training events, newsletters and teaching materials provided the only national reference point for the field. Its importance, though was diminished by local factors, especially in areas where there was strong leadership from an LEA (as in several of our case study sites).

We have tracked the way people have responded to and developed strategies related to these tensions. Some of these tensions reflect enduring struggles (e.g professionalisation), some were created by the outside forces that impacted on it at particular moments (e.g. marketisation).

Professionalisation in a field that developed from a volunteer and part-time hourly paid workforce is extremely contentious. Practitioners entered the field in the mid-1970s when there was heightened awareness of civil rights and social justice issues in a range of social policy areas. This movement found expression in adult education as a key site for exercising a cultural politics of access – access to learning opportunities for disenfranchised groups. The abundance of voluntary and part-time paid work in adult literacy within the institutions of adult education at the time, attracted women with young families. People brought a set of ideals and networks from the early 1970s that entailed a particular view of social relations between tutors and learners. These are perceived by many as being distorted by new market-oriented and standardising regimes. These regimes - not specifically designed for the pedagogical benefit of ABE learners, but resulting from wider changes in post compulsory education and training - have led to contradictory demands on practitioners. Interestingly, these are often expressed in terms of ethical discomfort rather than political resistance. New regimes also interrupted earlier networks that were prime carriers of such fragile professional identities as have existed within this fragmented and vulnerable field. Working conditions have affected who enters the field, who stays and how the professional body was shaped, trained and supported. Stability is still missing in the sector. The issue here is the impossibility of having a real career in basic skills and we have many comments on this from the interviews.
Other tensions relate to the underlying ideologies influencing the field of ALLN, how the teaching and learning practices arise from the structures of provision and the norms of working with learners. These include:

Nomenclature of the field and its participants: the tension around discourse but also the deeper ideological debates; tensions between different stakeholders and a search for a non-discriminatory vocabulary for talking about a stigmatised aspect of difference.

Diversity v normalisation: how to recognise and respond to the diversity among learners whilst working towards a mainstreamed, systematised field of provision.

Different groupings in the field of adult continuing education: eg literacy, numeracy and ESOL; private trainers v college v community-based tutors; voluntary and statutory.

Pressures toward accountability that are shaping what counts as “good practice” in the field. Marketisation v collaboration: not an enduring tension but a very clear example of a force which originated outside the field and threw the prevailing cultural assumptions into relief.

Rights v obligations: the changing view of the student as citizen and the “learning polity”: compulsion/voluntary participation in learning; modelling democratic practice and relations within learning programmes; student autonomy.

Boundary issues about what counts as ALLN. These are currently especially sharp around ICT and around notions of “key skills” and “basic skills”.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy in Context: debates about embedded versus stand alone provision for ALN relate to a core issue of whether ALLN can be or should taught in a decontextualised way.

Why Don’t Adults Participate in ALLN Programmes?

We integrated the interview data with background variables from the NCDS survey to provide individual profiles which could identify new variables for future surveys. This helped us examine their current participation in learning against previous educational experiences.

In some cases people concur with the tests that their literacy and numeracy skills are inadequate but they are still uninterested in taking part in courses. What do our data tell us about why? There is evidence (supported by findings presented in Schuller et al 2004) that in later life people reach a working compromise between their ambitions and their actual lives, a phenomenon which has been called ‘settlement’. This does not always imply living on the margins in terms of wealth. People have support systems and also deep identities built around the experience of exclusion. Being asked to challenge that ‘settlement’ may be seen as threatening and too risky, given past experiences of education. An interviewee who “can’t be bothered” to go back to formal learning also says of his schooling “they couldn’t be bothered with me”.

How do we explain the differences between self and external assessment of basic skill need? Sometimes people describe clear limitations in terms of basic skills, but their lives are lived where many aspects of literacy and numeracy are either irrelevant (particularly in routine employment) or so embedded in everyday activities that
people are not aware of them as such – any difficulties or limitations they have are attributed to other things. In the case, for example, where limited literacy or numeracy is associated with a complex of other factors, such as health or long-term disability, this presents much more salient constraints on people including key limitations on their employment opportunities and their ability to participate regularly in educational activities. Sometimes we discovered a history which suggested that as children whose teachers’ rated them as quite competent under-performed on tests for a number of reasons which affected the subsequent maintenance of basic skills. Interviewees might state they had low levels of skill but still not see publicity as targeted at them. From the distantly remembered “On the Move” to the current Gremlins campaign people felt that ALLN would be good for people who need it, but did not count themselves as being in that group. The yardsticks of personal efficacy in everyday life are more subtle and multi-faceted than educational assessments; they are embedded in social relationships, complementary abilities and personal qualities and when things go wrong, there are many potential causes of this too.

Other findings from our data include: adults’ ambivalence about accreditation and clear understanding of the difference between use and exchange value; very extensive detail on the dynamics of current informal learning in relation to ICT; views about teachers and preferences about the organizational context of learning; information on the attitudinal and emotional legacies of previous school experiences and different attributions of failure.

**Activities**

An **advisory group**, comprised of people with a range of perspectives from the policy, research and practitioner communities, has met three times per year. This working group has acted as a 'sounding board' throughout the project, as we designed the methodology, carried out the data collection and analysis, and devised an effective dissemination strategy.

We have also made **links with other historians** working in the areas of Literacy, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Adult Education more broadly. We commissioned a special discussion paper from Sheila Rosenberg to strengthen our basic framework outlining the field of ESOL which has developed rather differently from literacy and numeracy. We held a one-day consultation with Professor Jennie Ozga, University of Edinburgh, to discuss our policy analysis framework and took part in a one-day conference on *Methodological Issues in Lifelong Learning* organized at the University of the West of England.

**Mixed Methods Training Event.** We have obtained ESRC TLRP capacity building funding for a one day training event on the use of large scale datasets in qualitative research on October 29th 2004 (see Section 2 on Dissemination plans).

We organized an **ESRC Seminar Series** on Adult Basic Education (with Lyn Tett, University of Edinburgh). This brought together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to take forward socio-cultural approaches to adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL education, facilitate discussion and comparison of policy developments across Scotland and England and beyond to inform contemporary policy developments. The network formed through these seminars is planning to apply for European funding
(see Section 2 on Dissemination plans). Details and papers can be found at
www.education.ed.ac.uk/hce/ABE-seminars

**Outputs**

The outputs from this project are intentionally varied. As well as publishing our own analyses it has been a central aim of the project to find ways of assembling and storing the data in forms so that it will be accessible to future historians and participants in the field of ALLN. The data we are generating in the project is exceedingly rich and we are identifying many specialist themes that it will not be possible to pursue within the remit of the project. This makes the archiving of our data especially significant as a resource for further research.

**Datasets:** We have captured rich and inflected stories from three main stakeholder groups in ALLN across a crucial period of social change. These new data are being archived for future researchers and participants in ALLN. X Interview transcripts will be deposited with the Qualidata archive. 78 transcripts with adults from the NDCS cohort study will be separately deposited with the Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

**Documentary archive:** We have also catalogued and archived 50 themed boxes of documentary evidence. The documentary archive, cross-referenced to the oral history accounts, will be deposited in Lancaster University library with an electronic database interface accessible through our website. This archive will complement the interview data to be deposited with the ESRC Qualidat archive. The organization of the archive is described in detail on our website at:
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/projects/edres/changingfaces/archive.htm

**Website:** We have developed an interactive website through which we can communicate the progress of the research. This is also a place where people contribute their experiences of ABE if we are unable to interview them face-to-face.

**Book:** We have a book contract with Trentham Books (outline attached). The aim is for the book to be a research resource for practitioners and researchers in the field, rather than a straightforward factual history. In addition to the book itself, we plan to publish an archive catalogue and a “source” book which will contain factual material assembled during the project, signposting readers to other libraries and archives relevant to adult basic education.

**Published Articles:** We have published a number of articles, listed in Appendix 2.

**Conference papers and Presentations:** We have carried out workshops and given papers at a number of national and regional conferences to publicise the project and invite discussion about our findings as they emerge. These are listed in Appendix 2.

Professor Hamilton gave two presentations about the project as part of a lecture tour of Australia in November 2002 (at the University of South Australia and Griffith University, Brisbane) and held discussions with historians of the Australian Adult Language and literacy field with a view to developing comparative analyses.
Impacts

The project aimed to impact on both practitioner and policy communities. We have had high interest in the project from practitioners throughout and have engaged with them through the data collection, the ESRC seminar series, the Lancaster MA in ALLN, and a variety of conference presentations and publications. The first book from the project is aimed specifically at practitioners and we are designing other innovative format materials for professional development courses (see Dissemination section of End of Project form).

Our website is being maintained by Lancaster University as a resource for the field, together with access to the online archive catalogue and will contribute to a permanent record of a key period of policy-making in the field. We have already started to receive requests for access to our interview transcripts and other materials. For example a new ESRC project looking at language and literacy use among AfroCaribbean Youth in Manchester will be using our material to contextualise their research data.

The National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) is an important channel for communicating with the policy community. We have been invited to do a workshop at the NRDC Skills for Life conference in London in November 2004, indicating interest in the project from both the policy and research communities.

International interest has been stimulated through the ESRC Seminar Series, and by Mary Hamilton’s visits to Australia and Canada in 2002/3 and to the US in 2004. Yvonne Hillier will build on this interest through her sabbatical trip to Australia this coming winter.

Future Research Priorities

- The Development of the Skills for Life Strategy since 2000. It was not within the scope of this project to deal with the implementation phase of the Skills for Life strategy. Although the NRDC is carrying out impact studies, an independent overview and analysis linking with the findings from Changing Faces would be an excellent complement to the current project.

- Policy comparison between the four countries of the UK. Since devolution, the social and educational policy in Scotland, Wales and NI has diverged in significant ways. The ERSC Seminar series began exploring these differences and a proposal to develop this analysis is being prepared.

- Narratives of adult learners: We did not seek to interview a sample of adult learners from basic skills programmes in this project, but mainly used the NCDS cohort study to represent the learners’ perspective. Such an interview study would be possible though for reasons described in the original proposal, it would be time consuming to trace a representative group. A feasible alternative strategy would be to analyse a sample of student writing from the
large amount that has been donated to the Changing Faces archive (described above). A study combining both of these methods would be ideal.

- **Continued analysis** of our existing data sources e.g. exploring the changing influence of technology on materials and resources and teaching methods; professional development of the field; the key role of the mass media in shaping the field and responses to media mobilizations
- Further developing the **link between the qualitative and quantitative** data from the NCDS cohort members

**Ethical Issues**

We devised a standard consent form to be used at face-to-face interviews which asks permission to store tapes and transcripts. Respondents can have their name used, remain anonymous, choose a pseudonym or have their words used on the website or in publications. A similar consent form has also been used for both the web and e-mail interviews. The addition of permission to hold and use the tape fits with the Oral History Society’s recommendations.

Most respondents wish their own names to be used on the interviews. In a few cases, people chose a pseudonym. We have placed restrictions on access to several transcripts, either because final consent has not yet been gained, or because sensitive material is included that needs to be embargoed for an agreed period of time.

Special ethical issues arose in the case of the NCDS interviews which have been anonymised in consultation with the CLS. These issues have been discussed more fully in Hamilton (2004a).
Appendix 1  NCDS Interviews: Final Report June 2004

The first pilot interview took place on 22\(^{nd}\) August 2002, the latest interview being carried out on 30\(^{th}\) June 2003. A total sample of 161 cohort members was identified. The cohort members had been allocated to one of eight groups dependent on measures of their basic skills: assessed, self-reported difficulties and wish to improve their skills. The aim was to interview twelve cohort members in each group - three in each of the four study areas, London, East Midlands (Leicester), East Anglia (Norwich) and North West (Greater Manchester, Merseyside) and hopefully achieve a balanced male-female ratio. Table 1 shows the distribution of the total identified sample by study area and group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>East Anglia ♂</th>
<th>East Anglia ♀</th>
<th>East Midlands ♂</th>
<th>East Midlands ♀</th>
<th>London / South East ♂</th>
<th>London / South East ♀</th>
<th>North West ♂</th>
<th>North West ♀</th>
<th>All ♂</th>
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<td>20</td>
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</table>

*deceased

Of the 96 planned interviews, 78 (or 81\%) were successfully completed. The overall male-female ratio of the achieved interviews was 53\% female.

In five of our 32 group specific study areas (highlighted in table 1 above) it had not been possible to identify three cohort members. However, for the 27 group specific study areas with three of more identified cohort members,
- three (or more) interviews were conducted in 17 group specific study areas (63\%)
- two interviews in 7 group specific study areas (26\%)
- one interview in 3 group specific study areas (11\%)

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The distribution of the successful interviews is displayed in Table 2 below, with a reminder of the characteristics of cohort members in each of the eight groups in Table 3.

### Table 2: Distribution of achieved interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>East Anglia</th>
<th>East Midlands</th>
<th>London / South East</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>All</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: ‘ - ’ = no possibilities; ‘ – ’ = all possibilities contacted, no interview achieved;

### Table 3: Summary of groups of cohort members identified for interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessed literacy or numeracy difficulties</th>
<th>Self-reported reading, writing, numbers or dates/calendar difficulties</th>
<th>Wish to improve reading, writing skills or maths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Group 1</td>
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<td>Group 8</td>
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</table>

All of the interviews in the North West and East Anglia have been transcribed and checked by the interviewers: Barbara Walker in East Anglia (primarily Norfolk), Gill O’Toole in the North West. The interviews carried out by Samantha Parsons in London / South East and the East Midlands have all been transcribed, but not all have been checked.

Detailed background information on each cohort member interviewed has been attached to each transcribed interview, ready for analyses. The list of variables used to bring to life the background of the cohort members interviewed is attached. An outline of the interview schedule used for these interviews is detailed below.

**Outline of the structure of the interview:**
• Re-introduce ‘Changing Faces’ project – use the publicity sheet sent out with the initial contact letter.
• Update of current personal situation
• Knowledge of nationwide Literacy or Numeracy Campaigns since the 1970s – The Campaign Timeline
• Knowledge of local Literacy or Numeracy Campaigns
• Formal learning experiences – gaining qualifications, attending evening classes, etc. What methods works best?
• Informal learning techniques – the ways that we all gain information but are largely unrecognised as ‘learning’
• Key moments or individuals over the last 30 years – when, what or who have helped new information or skills be gained – The Personal Timeline
• How ‘learning’ has changed over the years – for example technological developments. Look at participant’s own experiences or those of family members or friends
• Plans for the future
Appendix 2. List of Published Articles, Conference and Seminar Presentations

Published Articles


Conference and seminar presentations


Hillier, Y., Policy and practice in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL Seminar given to School of Education, University of Wolverhampton, Walsall, May 2004


Hillier, Y., Policy, what policy? Continuing Education Seminar, University of Sussex, June 2003


Hamilton, M. “Developing an Inclusive Policy and Practice for Literacy and Numeracy” Plenary presentation at Research Forum Literacies of Engagement between Cultures Northern Territory University, Darwin, Australia 22nd Nov 2002

Hamilton, M., Castleton, G and Searle, J. Changing Faces: Dialogue from the UK and Australia on changes in adult literacy policy and provision over the last quarter of a Century. Griffith University Centre for Literacy and Language Education Visiting Scholar Seminar 20th Nov 2002, Brisbane.


Hillier, Y., Changing Faces of Adult Numeracy Practitioner Workshop Adults Learning Maths Conference, Uxbridge College, July 2002


Appendix 3: References


Russell Committee (1973) *Report on Adult Education: a plan for development*. HMSO


