

Enhancing Learning in Further Education through the Interaction of Informal and Formal Literacies

The Focus of the Study

Literacy practices

The literacy practices in which students engage are crucial resources for enhancing learning outcomes across the full range of the curriculum and, as they develop, are generic to emergent learning in the life course. This research focuses on the use, refinement and diversification of literacy practices as a student participates in a Further Education (F.E.) course.

We define literacy practices as reading, writing and talk with, through, and about texts. Such practices involve particular capabilities of literate people that enable them to construct, interpret and inter-relate a wide range of texts. By 'text' we refer to any object that conveys meanings, even in part, through written language. One of the emergent requirements upon the literate person in the 21st century is the capacity to work with a range of new types of text *and* in different modalities – both visual and aural and in combinations of both (as with ICT, for example). Diverse texts and diverse modes of exchange are becoming increasingly complex and increasingly part of everyday use. This study focuses upon those literacy practices – the knowledge and capabilities they involve and the texts and modalities they address – which support learning across the F.E. curriculum. We are not concerned with the learning of literacy as a basic skill, but with the diverse *literacies* that students may bring to their learning and those that their learning requires; with the diversity of practices through which positive learning outcomes will be supported and developed in a range of subjects and at a range of levels.

Interaction between informal and formal literacy practices

We will focus upon the interaction between informal vernacular literacy practices grounded in family, prior schooling, community, workplace, and popular culture experiences and those practices entailed in the more formal institutional context of post-compulsory education and training in F.E. colleges. The research will be undertaken in F.E. colleges in England and Scotland to account for diversity in learning contexts, college curricula, student populations, and related diversity in literacy experiences. We will investigate the interface between: (i) the existing informal literacies that people may bring with them to support their learning in a variety of courses across the curriculum; (ii) the informal literacies that people control but which are not engaged in their more formal learning and the reasons why this occurs; and (iii) the literacy practices required in a representative range of courses in the F.E. context. Such interaction is at the heart of access, inclusion, retention and attainment in post-school learning opportunities and policy goals of supporting learning in the life course. The research will directly address the perceived gap between student achievement and the demands of the curriculum by investigating the interpretation, construction, and relating of texts – and the experiences, knowledge and capabilities that underlie these – as highly formative for, and integral to, learning outcomes during F.E. study and beyond. A major objective will be to uncover actual and potential overlaps and connections between sets of literacy practices that generate what can be described as two-way or 'border' literacy practices – practices which are hybrids of both informal and formal literacies. As Figure 1 (*overleaf*) illustrates, the purpose is to identify, with colleagues working in F.E. and their students, those 'border literacy practices' that can positively mediate between the students' everyday life and their learning in the F.E. context.

Border literacy practices occur in fluid, in-between spaces when someone is using certain text types, practices and capabilities in ways that overlap with, link to, are generic to, or provide foundations for another practice or practices in another context and/or for other purposes.

For example, an unemployed man in late forties, with poor educational experience, describes himself as 'semi-literate' in a front room where, behind him, is a shelf full of copies of a monthly permaculture magazine. In a small garden and greenhouse he experiments with permaculture and he also goes to permaculture sites and meetings and talks with people. He keeps 'thinking about' doing

a course in horticulture offered by his local F.E. college, but is nervous about this because of his bad educational experience and record. Border literacy practices are practices within his experience which have the potential to interrelate with the requirements of the course (from Breen et al. 1994).

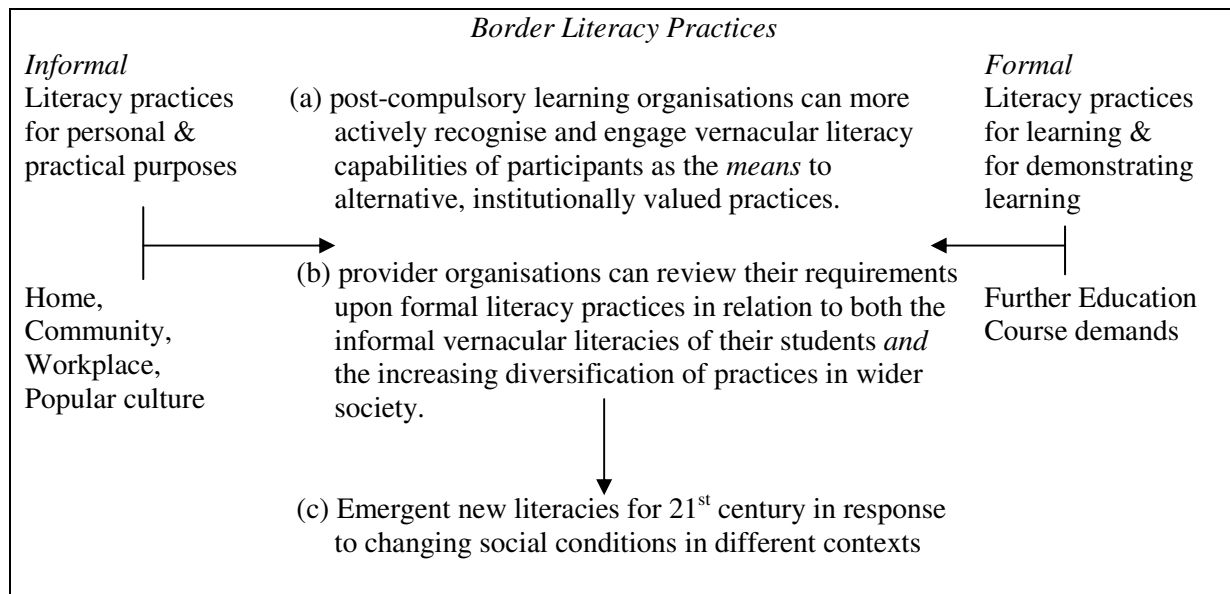


Figure 1: Drawing on 'Border literacy practices' to enhance educational opportunities

We anticipate that the F.E. college, among all community settings, is one of the most fertile locations for the recognition and generation of border literacies and, thereby, their development within pedagogy as means for learning both within and beyond the college itself.

The first half of the research will identify and specify - to a level of detail so far not attempted by research - border literacy practices that actually or potentially have positive effects upon learning outcomes in F.E. From this specification, the second part of the research will identify and trial new directions for the F.E. curriculum to mobilise such integrated literacy practices. These interventions will also identify and evaluate the use of the generic knowledge and capabilities that underlie emergent literacy practices for learning and for participation in the wider society, thereby anticipating the development of literacies in the life course beyond F.E. These interventions will be closely evaluated in order to disseminate ways of building upon such border literacies more widely across the sector.

Research Aims

1. To identify those 'border literacies' that enable people to negotiate successfully between informal vernacular literacies and formal literacies within the F.E. context, that positively affect learning outcomes, and that can serve as generic resources for learning throughout the life course.
2. To develop, implement and evaluate an intervention programme based on these findings, aimed at mobilising students' use of their vernacular literacy capabilities and 'border' practices as means for learning in F.E. and other contexts.
3. To uncover what may be common within the F.E. experience of a range of learners across different areas of the curriculum in different F.E. sites in both England and Scotland, whilst also accounting for diversity of experiences.
4. To inform future practice and policy in the design of learning opportunities that will enable smoother articulation between informal vernacular literacy practices, formal institutional literacy practices, and emergent demands upon literate persons in the wider society.
5. To engage F.E. practitioners directly in a research partnership to investigate (a) the literacy capabilities and practices of their learners; (b) the literacy demands of their curriculum subjects; and (c) the development of appropriate 'two-way' intervention strategies taking account of (a) and (b), and thus enable and directly support evidence-based practice within the F.E. context, and to evaluate this process especially in terms of its sustainability.

In the sections that follow, we provide a rationale for the research and its aims with regard to the policy context, to relevant theoretical and research developments in literacy, to current perspectives on informal and formal learning, and to research capacity building. On the basis of these perspectives, we argue for the significance of F.E. as an ideal setting for such research. Following this rationale we specify the research questions, the research design that will address them, our strategies for management, and intended outputs from the research. Our strategy for user engagement, communication and impact is set out in Technical Annexe A.

Rationale for the Research

The Policy Context

Policy goals of increasing and widening participation in post-compulsory education and learning for the life course have resulted in a very diverse student body and provision of a wider range of learning opportunities. Our on-going consultations with principals in the F.E. colleges which will be the sites for our research, with the Director of Research and Research Manager, LSDA, with Carolyn Davidson, SFEU, and with other colleagues working in the F.E. sector have identified concerns relating to access, retention and attainment. They have expressed strong interest in ways of integrating students' prior and informal learning into pedagogical practice and affirm that students' experiences and capabilities in the uses of literacy are pivotal in such integration.

The study is set in a context in which there is significant underachievement against current literacy demands in society, particularly among people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, with poor educational experience, or with low levels of English (Moser, 1999; Bynner et al., 1997; Carey et al., 1997, Foster, 2000, OECD, 2000). The recent survey of 1500 Scottish employers, for example, revealed that the majority identify the need for skills in ICT and literacy-based communication as the most significant requirements upon new employees and believe that current skill levels in these areas are generally lower than required (Scottish Executive, 2000a). However, similar surveys of people of working age have revealed that the majority believe they have sufficiently high levels of literacy to be able to undertake their jobs (Scottish Executive 2000b, *inter alia*). Furthermore, many respondents to such surveys do not see themselves as moving to positions in which demands upon their capabilities in ICT and literacy-based communication are greater. In a context when there is a growing shortage of skilled and professional people throughout Britain, people's self-assessments of their literacy capabilities appear to be grounded only in their present circumstances and therefore inappropriate for future mobility. This evidence suggests that practical outcomes from a research project focusing on literacy and its relationship with learning will have direct significance for employment adaptability beyond F.E.

This project seeks to complement and inform a range of initiatives in both England and Scotland to enhance the attainment of literacy as part of the agenda for the improvement of 'basic skills', 'key skills', 'core skills', 'core competences', or 'learning to learn'. These initiatives include the setting up of the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDCALN) by the DfES in England and Wales and the National Training Project for Adult Literacies in Scotland. These initiatives are focusing on the induction of people of all ages into at least 'functional' literacy and numeracy. Embedded in such initiatives as Curriculum 2000 in England and Higher Still in Scotland and the frameworks for NVQs and SVQs is a focus across a range of subjects at different levels upon communication skills, computer literacy, and literacy-dependent transferable skills. By focusing upon border literacies and capabilities in using literacies that are generic to emergent literacy demands in the life course, this project addresses literacy-based practices that can enhance learning in the widest sense. In this way, it complements the current development of basic and transferable skills, the existing research being conducted by organisations such as the NRDCALN, and the ESRC Seminar Series on Adult Basic Education.

Current Theory and Research in Literacy

Increasingly, people are required to negotiate literacy practices not only within certain spaces – e.g. FE, the workplace, the social club, the home, etc. – but also between and across spaces (Lankshear, 1998; Benson et al., 1990; Farrell, 2000). It is in those 'in-between' spaces that there can be a disjunction

between literacy practices within a person's experience and the literacy demands of curriculum and assessment which have a direct impact upon access, retention and achievement.

The standards frameworks associated with post-16 education have been criticised for relying on an under-researched and under-theorised understanding of literacy as a fixed set of skills (Eraut, 1999). Literacy has tended to be defined as a set of technical skills developed independent of the context of learning and the subjects being studied and open to codification into standards and levels of achievement. Policy and intervention have, to date, focused upon this autonomous model of literacy in which links are assumed between measurable norms of literacy acquisition and employability (Street, 1984; Hamilton & Barton, 2000). This orientation has displaced those informal vernacular literacy practices that people undertake daily by assuming a deficit at the level of skill, particularly on the part of low achievers. It also displaces the development of such practices as the foundation for refinement in literacy practices that may be of particular benefit when interacting with literacy demands of formal learning. While pedagogic practice in F.E. may be based on a more complex understanding of literacy, there remains a need for research to document such pedagogy and its beneficial interface with both vernacular literacies and its impact upon the development of emergent literacies in the wider society.

Current theory and research on literacy has taken a number of directions that challenge a narrow technical skills perspective and which, in particular, address changing literacy demands and practices in the 21st century. The concept of 'multiliteracies' refers to the growing plurality of texts that circulate within culturally and linguistically diverse societies and to the growth and diversification of types of text associated with both multi-media technologies and with mass popular culture (Cope & Kalantzis (eds.), 2000). Information and communication technologies imply new possibilities for learning which have been a major focus within F.E. and elsewhere. However, technically mediated learning generates new demands upon our interpretation and use of digital rhetorics (Morgan, 1999). In the context of globalisation, access to emergent and diverse literacies implies changes in what it means to be a literate person in a democratic society (Edwards et al., 2002). Challenges of the information age, the knowledge economy and globalising processes, including the increased mobility of both people and educational opportunities have a direct impact upon both students and staff in F.E.

Recent studies of academic writing in learning contexts have identified the consequences for identity of participating in culturally alien institutional and disciplinary discourses. They also reveal that students have to grapple with new literacies in the crossing and mixing of genres (i.e. of conventions for writing) as they move from course to course (Ivanič, 1998; Lea & Street, 1998; Prior, 1998; Lea and Stierer, (eds.) 2000; Jones et al. (eds.) 2000; Lillis, 2001). To date, these studies have largely focussed on Higher Education: the parallel formation of disciplinary and professional identities through emergent literacy practices remains to be explored within F.E.

Informed by methodologies derived from applied linguistics and social anthropology, 'New Literacy Studies' conceptualise literacy as a set of social practices located in the context of social relations, and situated within broader community or organisational goals (Barton 1994; Street, 1995; Gee, 2000). There is growing evidence from such studies that people engage in a remarkable diversity of literacy practices in family, peer-group, work and community settings. Furthermore, people who manifest low levels of literacy against standardised criteria also reveal a repertoire of literacy practices that, whilst being neither recognised nor explicitly called upon in certain educational contexts, reveal levels of activity and sophistication that can provide the foundation for life course learning in both informal and formal settings (Breen et al., 1994; Brooks et al., 1997; Barton and Hamilton 1998; Barton et al. (eds.), 2000; Poulson et al., 1997).

Formal and Informal learning

The relationship between informal and formal learning is a major area of interest in terms of curriculum, assessment, student support and research in post-16 education and training with a range of initiatives designed to give recognition for learning in informal contexts and to support students' progression in negotiating the 'in-between' spaces. For example, the accreditation of prior experiential learning, the provision of guidance and study skills support are integral to goals of widening participation. Each

demands and often assumes certain literacy practices, yet the negotiation between vernacular and formal literacy practices in the F.E. setting remains unexplored.

Some of the work on informal learning confuses learning with a surface distinction between contexts. That is, learning becomes 'informal' because it takes place outside of 'formal' settings. Yet much learning in formal settings may take place informally, in conversation in bars and cafeterias, in text exchanges, in reflections upon a television programme, etc. (Coffield, 2000). Thus, the in-between spaces that engage border literacies should not be confused with the crossing of institutional boundaries, as the relationship between the formal and the vernacular is more complex than this. Complex networks of practices evolve through which learning takes place, only some of which is valued through assessment and accreditation. Mobilising the literacy practices to negotiate this complexity requires approaches to learning and teaching which recognise the demands upon learners, the practices in which they already participate in competent ways, and the spatio-temporal orderings through which this is occasioned. Research on literacy practices is therefore a central part of the wider recognition of the important interaction between informal and non-formal learning in people's learning trajectories in different settings throughout life (Eraut, 2000; Gorard & Rees, 2002).

The growing interest in informal learning has been much influenced by ethnographic studies (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and life history approaches (West, 1996). These have pointed to the situated and active nature of learning, and have been theoretically framed by notions of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), and actor-networks (Nespor, 1994). These approaches share perspectives with New Literacy Studies (as above) in which literacy practices are viewed as grounded and shaped by the communities in which they occur and sustained by values, beliefs and power relations that reflect their cultural contexts. The present study approaches the F.E. setting as a learning community within which its own formal literacy practices may engage or displace those informal practices of students and, thereby, the communities and cultural contexts from which these spring. A key purpose of the study is to undertake a precise examination of the interface between such informal and formal practices as the means to revealing the potentials of negotiation between them for students' learning outcomes. And these outcomes will include the development of border literacy practices that can network across personal, community and cultural experiences and, thereby, enhance learning within and beyond F.E.

Research Capacity Building

This project will establish a research partnership between experienced researchers in H.E. with colleagues in four F.E. sites. We will lay the foundations for sustainable research in the participating colleges whilst also deriving key principles from the experience for practitioner research across the sector.

McIntyre and McIntyre (n.d.) identify four aspects of capacity building in researching teaching and learning. First, they suggest there is little access to theory and research beyond Education and that what is accessed is rarely applied. Our project is located primarily in the disciplines of applied linguistics and social anthropology with a specifically applied focus upon the process of learning in context. Second, they suggest there is a need for capacity building through the involvement of people other than established educational researchers. Our project focuses specifically on building capacity for undertaking and evaluating research directly with FE practitioners. Stirling is involved in the joint delivery of a Teaching Qualification for Further Education with a number of F.E. colleges. The processes and findings of this project will be fed into parts of the course focusing on the development of 'research literacies' among F.E. staff. Third, McIntyre and McIntyre identify a lack of quantitative evidence on effective teaching and learning strategies. We will address this by identifying measurable benefits from interventions involving informal and border literacy practices. Fourth, and finally, they identify partnership as key to capacity building. Our project is a joint H.E.-F.E. collaboration, drawing upon and developing existing partnerships with the colleges and with wider sectoral organisations that have a direct interest in the specific focus upon literacies and the research partnership that the project entails.

Further Education as a context for research on literacy practices

Further education is central to policies of life course learning (DfEE, 1999; Scottish Office, 1998) and it is an arena that has been identified as having great potential for strategic research that can have direct benefit to the sector (Cullen et al., 2002). F.E. provides an ideal setting for the investigation of the interaction of formal and informal literacies due to its diversity of student population socially and in terms of prior learning experiences, age, and learning purposes. F.E. also embraces a diversity of learning processes, settings, and outcomes including competence-based qualifications, modern apprenticeships, part time study, workplace and college-based provision, partnerships with employers, universities and other agencies, and increasingly, through the use of computer mediated communication, forms of flexible, distance and distributed learning. This diverse provision along the academic-vocational continuum, and from 'basic skills' through to undergraduate studies entails large and unique variation in the literacy practices that students are expected to engage, build upon and develop, with subject areas ranging from ones in which literacy practices are often assumed to be peripheral to ones in which relatively complex literacy practices are central. The F.E. college is one of the most fertile locations for the recognition and generation of border literacies and, thereby, their development within pedagogy as means for learning both within and beyond the college itself.

Research Questions

Each of the following questions will be framed within the comparative dimensions of different student populations, different curriculum areas in F.E., different college sites, and the different contexts of provision in England and Scotland.

Addressing existing practices

1. What kinds of literacy practices - their contexts, textual means, and outcomes - are undertaken within family, community, workplace, popular culture, and other informal settings by those participating in F.E.? What knowledge and capabilities do such vernacular practices call upon?
2. What are the literacy demands and their underlying knowledge and capabilities that are related to successful learning in representative areas of the F.E. curriculum - including planned work/professional placements?
3. What is the nature of the on-going interaction between students' informal literacy practices and those institutional practices required during the teaching and learning of curriculum subjects?

Addressing the potentials of border literacy practices

4. What are the underlying dispositions, knowledges, and capabilities that enable students to negotiate literacies across formal and informal activities and settings?
5. What is the nature of the literacy practices that exemplify this negotiation thereby serving as 'border literacies'?
6. What is the relationship between such 'border literacies' and successful learning across a range of curriculum subjects within F.E.?
7. What do students and teachers see as the relationships between such 'border literacies' and emerging requirements upon literacy in the wider society beyond F.E.?

Addressing explicit intervention

8. In what ways can the more explicit negotiation between informal and formal literacies - emerging border literacies - serve as an intervention within subjects across the curriculum thereby being engaged by teachers and students with the objective of enhancing learning experiences and outcomes?
9. Which features of such intervention can be generalised across F.E. sites so that both policy and future curricula may be informed by these?

Addressing research capacity in the F.E. context

10. In what ways can the research potential of F.E. practitioners be engaged in partnership with experienced researchers in the investigation of students' literacy practices and in the development, delivery and evaluation of evidence-based intervention?

11. What are the capacity building outcomes from this kind of engagement and in what ways can such engagement in the particular research sites be recontextualised into other F.E. sites to achieve beneficial and sustainable research across the sector?

Research Design

The research is multi-disciplinary drawing upon a range of methods and analytical approaches developed in their work on literacy practices in diverse family, community and educational contexts by Breen et al. (1994), Barton and Hamilton (1998), contributors to Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič eds. (2000) and to Street (2001). The study will be undertaken over a 36-month period within four F.E. colleges with which we have had initial consultations that have shaped our design. Small scale pilot studies have been initiated in England and Scotland. At Lancaster, a university-funded study was undertaken interviewing students about their literacy practices to support their learning on different degree programmes at Lancaster University and Blackburn College. In Stirling a project is currently being undertaken by an FE practitioner who is seconded to trial aspects of the proposed methodology devoted to the initial mapping of literacy practices within a college other than the target sites.

There will be four main Phases of the study as indicated in Table 1 (*overleaf*). The *Induction Phase* will provide initial data concerning the literacy demands of college work and initiate the direct engagement of volunteers from college staff as researchers within the team. The *Literacies Data Phase* will involve detailed collection and on-going analysis of data from both informal and formal literacy practices, undertaken by the whole research team including F.E. staff research partners and their students. The *Intervention Phase*, building directly upon the previous two, will specifically address the mobilisation of 'border literacies' within the curriculum to enhance learning and the pedagogic potentials of evidence-based F.E. practitioner research related to such literacies. Finally, the *Evaluation Phase* serves wider dissemination through the process of synthesising all the data from the previous phases, especially assessing the impact of the intervention upon student learning and deducing strategies both for future curriculum development and for sustainable practitioner research and cross-sectoral research partnerships within and beyond the research sites. Whilst there will be on-going assessment and evaluation of outcomes in each previous phase and continued wider communication regarding the project, this Phase has the explicit purpose of informing broader policy about beneficial literacy practices within curricula, and research capacity relating to F.E.

Contexts and Participants

The study will be undertaken in four non-specialist F.E. institutions, two in England and two in Scotland. Consultations on feasibility of the research have been undertaken with staff in all colleges and three of the principals, who are keen for their colleges to be partners in the research. (For our draft agreement on partnership, see Technical Annex B). The colleges have been identified to represent regional contrasts in curricula and diversity in learner populations in terms of prior educational experiences, curriculum subjects studied, and socio-economic, linguistic and cultural identities. The two sites in each country represent distinctions between: broad provision up to degree level versus provision up to mid-level academic and vocational qualifications (such as National Certificates and university entry exams); wide catchment population versus localised catchment; central urban relatively deprived area versus semi-rural/suburban socio-economically mixed; mainly college-based provision versus significant outreach provision including distance programmes.

A key characteristic of the research will be the direct involvement of 16 F.E. staff who will work as members of the research team throughout the study with appropriate time-release to be able them to undertake such work. There will be 4 practitioner research partners in each college and each will base their research in two of their courses: a total of 8 courses per college. These 8 courses will be representative of the spread of subjects across the college curriculum and there will be some duplication of subjects across the four research sites to enable comparison. During the *Literacies Data Phase* experienced and college researchers and a research assistant will work collaboratively with at least 4 students in each course. The active participation of these 32 students in each college – about half of whom will be part-time - will be central to this Phase and they will work closely with

Table 1: Time-plan of the Research Process

<i>Phases & Months</i>	<i>Main Activities at each Phase</i>	<i>Research Questions addressed</i>
<p>Phase 1: Induction</p> <p>Months 1 - 8 Jan 03 To Aug 04</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction of F.E. Staff research partners - forming of site specific teams. • Overview of the four focus colleges (provision, student profiles, procedures, etc). • Collection of documentary evidence of institutional literacy demands. • Assessment of data on learning outcomes from current year in the focus curriculum areas. • Deductions from piloting literacies data collection procedures with 4 staff and 8 (min) students during 1 term. • Evaluation by Steering Committee of stakeholders of design and procedures for Phase 2. • Feedback on design & procedures for Phase 2 from presentations to sector managers and practitioners (e.g. at professional conferences). • Finalisation of data-gathering procedures by whole research team. 	2, 3 & 10
<p>Phase 2: Literacies Data</p> <p>Months 9 - 20 Sept 04 To Aug 05</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of staff in all 4 sites: literacy requirements in curriculum. • Survey of students in all sites: literacy requirements for study and daily literacy practices. • Detailed data from student samples on informal and formal literacy practices and the knowledge and capabilities involved and generated. • Detailed data from college research partners on literacy practices within curriculum areas in relation to: current practices in the workplace and the wider society, student achievement in relation to curriculum-based practices, and the related impact upon their learning. • Assessment data on learning outcomes of sample students: start year baselines and learning outcomes from the year. • Data deduced from students and staff researchers on 'border literacies' impacting upon learning and as potential for negotiation and transfer between informal and formal literacy practices. • Principles for design of intervention exploiting 'border literacies'. • Feedback on outcomes from literacies data from presentations to sector managers and practitioners. • Steering Committee evaluation of outcomes from this phase and proposed intervention in Phase 3; inform TLRP Programme & disseminate findings. 	1-6 & 10
<p>Phase 3: Intervention</p> <p>Months 21 - 31 Sept 05 To July 06</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention programme addressing two-way enhancement of 'border literacies' collaboratively developed and implemented by initial group of staff practitioner-researchers with research team. • Intervention implemented by additional staff from related curriculum areas. • Intervention programme undertaken by new and larger sample of students across curriculum areas. • Data on impact of intervention on relationship between student literacy practices developed in the intervention and learning outcomes. • Assessment data on learning outcomes of intervention and non-intervention students: start year baselines and learning outcomes from the year. 	7 - 10
<p>Phase 4: Final Evaluation</p> <p>Months 32 - 36 Aug 06 To Dec 06</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of ongoing evaluation of intervention programme. • Steering Committee review of findings from Phases 2 and evaluation of Phase 3 and advise on proposed dissemination procedures. • Completion of ongoing evaluation with staff research partners of the research process throughout the project and deductions for sustainable reflexive research in F.E. context. • Feedback on intervention data and evaluation of the intervention from dissemination to sector managers, practitioners & TLRP Programme. • Concluding reports to managers & practitioners across the sector, other interested parties, and the TLRP programme. 	7 - 11

the research team. (The target number of students in each site will be 32 whilst, allowing for attrition, the team will initially work with more than this number).

During the *Intervention Phase* in the second half of the study, each college researcher with the support of experienced members of the team will take on a coordinating collaborator role with an additional two staff colleagues in the development, implementation and evaluation of the intervention process. Again, the additional staff colleagues will be selected to represent the spread of subject provision. The intervention programme will be made available as part of the courses taught by the staff involved. Data on the actual implementation and impact of the intervention programme will be derived from both the participating staff and a sample of participating students representative of student populations within and across the focus subject areas. The total sample of intervention students in each site will be around 60. Data on the assessment of appropriate learning outcomes of this sample of students will need to be compared with the assessment of outcomes of a paired sample of non-intervention students. The additional collaborating staff and participating students will also inform the evaluation of the intervention process. Table 2 summarises the spread of participants across sites that will be involved in the study. (Note: Since students are unlikely to take the same course for more than one year, the students in Phase 3 will be different from the students in Phase 2.)

Table 2: Numerical Summary of Sites and Participants

Phase 2: Literacies Data Collection				Phase 3: Intervention Programme			
<i>F.E. Sites</i>	<i>F.E.Staff</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Sites</i>	<i>F.E.Staff</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>(New) Students</i>
Single	4 research	8	32	Single	12 (4 res.+ 8)	16	c60
All 4	16 research	32	128	All 4	48 (16 res.+ 32)	40	c240

Ethical Considerations

The involvement of practitioners as research partners will enable their interests to be respected in all aspects of the research. They will be involved not only in planning and participating in the data collection but also data interpretation and analysis, and they will be consulted on ethical issues which affect them. Ethical dilemmas, such as how to ensure fair treatment of all students in a group when only some are participating in the research and others are not, will be negotiated with participants as they arise. Research partners will be involved in the on-going dissemination of findings in Phases 2-4 which will ensure that they are not misrepresented and that confidentiality is maintained wherever necessary. Students will also be engaged as co-researchers of their own experiences in Phase 2, and hence, to a large extent, they will have control and ownership over findings relating to themselves. The research team will adopt a reflexive approach to analysis and interpretation by seeking feedback on appropriate parts of these directly from participating students. However, it will be necessary to take more systematic measures to ensure that all students involved understand the purposes, methods and intended and possible uses of the research and give their consent to all aspects of their involvement, including decisions about how to preserve confidentiality. As a minimum standard, the ethical code of the British Association for Applied Linguistics (see Supporting File BAALRecs.prn) will be followed and upheld.

Data Analysis

As indicated in Table 1, each phase of the study largely entails the collection of a variety of new types of data (for our review of existing data-sets, see Section 22 of the form). The aims of the study will be achieved through the accumulation and close descriptive and interpretative analysis of evidence from five related areas of focus: (i) contextual and student data, (ii) literacy practices, (iii) students’ learning outcomes, (iv) the intervention process involving both students and other practitioners and (v) the research partnership process. Table 3 (*overleaf*) provides a summary of the data relating to each of these focus areas. Analysis will be on-going both within and subsequent to each of the first three Phases of the research as data from each will be mutually informative. On-going analysis will inform planned communication of aspects of the study to appropriate stakeholders and within the TLRP Programme. Triangulation between participants and between

Table 3: The Data Types & Forms of Analysis

<i>Focal Area</i>	<i>Data sources</i>	<i>Forms of analysis</i>
Context and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents on college curricula, student profiles & progress; • Information from Steering Committee of stakeholders; • Observation of college procedures, classes, etc; • Interviews with staff; • Student bio-data in Phase 2 survey. 	Descriptive analysis involving classification and quantification.
Literacy practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented requirements upon students regarding literacy capabilities and practices in curriculum; • Survey questionnaires; • Ethnographic and case study data from both staff & students based upon literacy logs, actual texts, and photographic and audio-recorded evidence of practices in homes, workplaces, leisure activities, wider communities, etc; and of students' evaluation of the 'mobility' (or 'transferability') of literacy practices • Observation of college-based/related work; • Sequenced interviews with all staff & students in Phase 2 and all staff and representative samples of students in Phase 3; 	<p>Interpretive thematic analysis of multiple sources of data on literacy practices using conceptual frameworks from <i>The New Literacy Studies</i> (e.g. Barton & Hamilton, 1998).</p> <p>Genre and discourse analysis of texts including multi-modal text types (e.g. Ivanič , 1998).</p> <p>Cross-site comparisons.</p> <p>Explanatory analysis (e.g. Actor-Network Theory).</p>
Student Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from appropriate samples of students undertaking same curricula – year 1 broad sample; year 2 sample of participating students; year 3 comparative across intervention group and paired non-intervention group. Sources: • On-going and summative staff assessments; • College-based assessments; • Results from public exams; • Participant perceptions of outcomes through: student interviews, literacy logs and focus groups to examine participants' own definitions of what they think constitutes 'learning', and how different literacies have influenced their dispositions to learning. 	<p>Quantitative analysis and comparison of results, plus interpretation of influencing factors.</p> <p>Thematic analysis of participant perceptions of learning outcomes.</p>
Intervention Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of intervention procedures etc.; • Staff and student logs – reflective accounts of on-going literacy practices; • Interviews, focus groups and retrospective classroom observation with all staff and a purposive sample of students, to identify relationships between literacy practices and learning; • Assessment of subsequent learning outcomes (as above); • Steering committee feedback on evaluation 	<p>Linguistic-ethnographic analysis of how learning is accomplished.</p> <p>Thematic analysis of logs, interview and focus group data linked to categories emerging from analysis of classroom and work-placement data.</p>
Research Partnership Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College research partner and other practitioner logs; • Open-ended questionnaires; • Regular interviews; • Reflective Case Study Accounts of the process; • Steering committee feedback on process & its impact. 	<p>Qualitative interpretative analysis using frameworks from reflective practice studies (e.g. Allwright 2000 & 2001) plus data-driven categories.</p>

data-sets will be a major means of increasing rigour and validity of the analyses. Survey and other questionnaires, observations, assessment data, and relationships between the latter and progress during intervention will be analysed both statistically and interpretively. In view of the variety of data types to be integrated within the research, we will use CAQDAS for data management and for interpretive and thematic analysis. Barton and Ivanič have experience of and have reviewed a range of such software, resulting in the identification of Atlas-ti as best suited to our needs, since it is the one of the best packages for handling intersecting textual and visual data.

As the means towards the achievement of the research aims, the major purposes of analysis will be to provide a macro-level account and understanding of the interaction of informal and formal practices in their relevant contexts of use and to provide micro-level accounts of three key aspects of our study: (i) existing and emerging 'border literacies'; (ii) the intervention process and its outcomes; and (iii) the research partnership process throughout the study.

Even in a process involving multiple perspectives and our reliance upon triangulated data sources at each phase, we are alert to the limitations of the study in terms of the generalisability of findings, particularly from the *Intervention Phase*. Being an innovation, the actual and perceived outcomes from this programme for staff and students will be influenced by this fact. The intervention is clearly a trial process and the analysis of data obtained in its evaluation will be indicative of *potential* benefits to learning whilst primarily providing guiding principles for the design of similar programmes across different F.E. contexts. We also view the data analysis not as something to be completed and then disseminated as if complete, but as part of our ongoing communication strategy. Our presentations will take place with colleagues from the wider F.E. community to engage with data and explore emerging outcomes seen to be particularly significant to them and to build research capacity by encouraging colleagues in other colleges to conduct projects related to this one. We anticipate recontextualisation of the research by the different partners in the research - staff and students - and by the practitioner network and other stakeholders in the process of wider dissemination (See Technical Annexe A for detailed **User Engagement, Communication and Impact Strategy**).

The Research Team & Project Management

The interdisciplinary team combines expertise in linguistics, education and social ethnography, with significant experience in managing research projects in: family, community and school literacies (Barton, Breen and Ivanič); ethnography (Barton); academic literacies and discourse analysis (Ivanič); applied linguistics and language intervention programmes (Breen); and in lifelong learning (Edwards). We have extensive experience of working with teams of literacy researchers and teaching practitioners in a range of contexts, and Ivanič was herself an FE lecturer. The team has employed a wide range of research methodologies including surveys, case studies, observation, interviews, stimulated recall, discourse and genre analysis, and ethnographic investigation.

Host Research Centres This England-Scotland collaboration builds upon existing links between the four applicants supported by the resources of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRL) and the Lancaster Literacy Research Centre (LLRC). At Stirling, Breen and Edwards have a well-developed network, through CRL, of existing relations with stakeholders including F.E. and workplace providers and employers. The SFEU fund staff to conduct their own small scale projects and we have support for some of these funds to be committed to projects related to this one. At Lancaster the LLRC, directed by David Barton, was established to support and undertake a wide range of research in the broad field of literacy studies. It is currently the base for a major DfES-funded study of literacy in the lives of people attending basic education, for providing the Ethnographic Resource for the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC), and for the Workplace Basic Skills Network. Recent consultations have established a network of practitioners in post-compulsory settings in the north of England within which to embed the research, and enabling cross-sector communication including F.E.. Barton and Ivanič are founder members of the Research and Practice in Adult Literacy group which, since 1985, has maintained communications between learners, tutors and researchers in adult literacy and has encouraged and supported related practitioner-research. LLRC is part of the consortium running the ESRC Seminar Series on Adult Basic Education, which also compares Scottish and English policy contexts.

There will be major opportunities for synergy between each of these activities and the proposed research, adding value to for TLRP. For example, the NRDC has already established a research programme involving and supporting teacher-researchers. In addition, Stirling provides a teaching qualification for teachers in F.E. staff and has significant numbers of F.E. staff completing professional Doctorates. Both entail research training with a strong bias towards applied practitioner research. Consequently F.E. research partners on the project will become part of a larger community of practitioner-researchers and have access to an existing support programme.

Management structure The project will have a management structure which provides local day-to-day management within and across the two research centres, with Ivanič as overall coordinator. Day-to-day management will be the responsibility of Breen at Stirling and Ivanič in Lancaster with Edwards and Barton respectively as back-ups. All four will coordinate the activities of research and support staff and college-based research partners. Communication about immediate decisions will use the e-mail list

we have established during the development of this proposal. In addition we will set up telephone conferences and regular face-to-face meetings between the research teams in England and Scotland. **Steering Committee** The project will be supported by a Steering Committee of stakeholders who will meet with members of the team on a regular basis to review the direction, progress and outcomes of the investigation. The Steering Committee will have an important role in shaping and implementing on-going strategies for widespread communication of the research process and its findings. In this way we intend to work with more colleagues across F.E. in addition to the immediate partners in the research. Representatives of TLRP projects working in related areas (for example, Bloomer and colleagues: Informal Learning, and Tett and colleagues: Literacy Provision) will also be invited to join this Steering Committee in order to achieve cross-programme synergies.

Outputs *This section should be read in conjunction with our*
User Engagement, Communication and Impact Strategy: see Technical Annexe A

At the end of each of the three main Phases of the research, the process and its outcomes will be disseminated within the research sites, across the F.E. sector in both countries, within the TLRP Programme and beyond. Table 4 summarises the outputs we will produce during the research (for dates and events for specific outputs, see Annexe A, Table 1).

Table 4: Summary of proposed research outputs

Intended Audiences	Types of Output
Colleagues within partner institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials about the research processes and findings, aimed at achieving successful recontextualisation into other subject areas.
The wider F.E. professional Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptations of the in-college materials for recontextualisation for use by colleagues in other contexts; Materials for engaging border literacy practices to enhance learning; Articles in Learning and Skills Research journal, and Teaching and learning, linked to presentations at regional and local professional conferences, e.g. those of SFEU, LSC and LSDA, and TLRP annual conferences; One or more publications for F.E. professionals about literacy for learning in F.E., and about practice-based research in this area.
The general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional articles contributing to debate about literacy practices in learning, employment and society.
The educational research, literacy studies and applied linguistics academic communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two articles a year in academic journals, linked to presentations at national and international conferences; One or more publications about contributions to understanding of literacy and learning from the project, and about research partnership principles and processes.

Contributions to teaching and learning theory, practice, and policy

In summary, this project will:

- Identify those literacy practices that are of direct benefit to students' learning across a range of subjects in Further Education.
- Compare informal, formal, and potential border literacy practices undertaken by a diverse population of students within different curricula, in different F.E. settings in England and Scotland.
- Identify newly emergent literacy practices that are increasingly demanded of the literate person in a democratic society in the 21st century in order to inform teaching and learning in the life course.
- Implement and closely evaluate a taught intervention programme across the F.E. curriculum that engages those literacy practices that have a positive effect upon learning outcomes.
- Establish a research partnership between H.E. and F.E. colleagues within and across sites in order to inform similar partnerships in the future.
- Disseminate findings on beneficial literacy practices for learning in the life course and for participating in emergent literacy practices in the wider society.
- Disseminate findings from a process of cross-sectoral situated research to encourage and inform the building of sustainable and context-sensitive research activity in post-compulsory education.

References

- Allwright, D. 2000. Exploratory practice: An appropriate methodology for language teacher development? Paper presented to the 8th IALS Symposium for Language Teacher Education, Edinburgh, Scotland 2000.
- Allwright, D. 2001. Three major processes of teacher development and the appropriate design criteria for developing and using them. In B. Johnson and S. Irujo (Eds.) *Research and Practice in Language Teacher Education: Voices from the Field. CARLA Working Paper 19*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: 115-133.
- Barton, D. (1994) *Literacy: An Introduction to the ecology of written language*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Barton, D. and Hamilton, M. (1998) *Local Literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. London: Routledge.
- Barton, D., Hamilton, M. and Ivanič, R. (eds.) (2000) *Situated Literacies: Reading and writing in context*. London: Routledge
- Benson, N., Gurney, S., Harrison, J. and Rimmershaw, R. (1990) The place of academic writing in whole life writing. In Hamilton, M., Barton, D. and Ivanič, R. (eds.) *Worlds of Literacy*. Cleveland: Multilingual Matters.
- Breen, M. P., Loudon, W., Barratt-Pugh, C., Rivalland, J., Rohl, M., Rhydwen, M. & Carr, T. (1994). *Literacy in its place: Literacy practices in urban and rural communities, Volumes 1 & 2*. Canberra: Department of Employment, Education and Training.
- Brooks, G., Gorman, T., Harman, J., Hutchinson, D., Moor, K., & Wilkinson, A. (1997). *Family Literacy Works*. Slough: NFER/Basic Skills Agency.
- Bynner, J. & Parsons, S. (1997) *It doesn't get any better: The impact of poor basic skills on the lives of 37 year olds*. London: Social Statistics Research Unit, City University/Basic Skills Agency.
- Carey, S., Low, S. & Hansboro, J. (1997) *Adult Literacy in Britain: A survey of adults aged 16-65 in Great Britain*. London: Office for National statistics.
- Coffield, F. (2000) Introduction: the structure below the surface: reassessing the significance of informal learning, in F. Coffield (ed.)
- Coffield, F. (ed.) (2000) *The Necessity of Informal Learning*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (eds.) (2000) *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge.
- Cullen, J., et al. (2002) *Review of the Current Pedagogic Research and Practice in the Fields of Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning*, London: Tavistock Institute.
- DfEE (1999) *Learning to Succeed*, London: HMSO.
- Edwards, R. and Usher, R. (2000) *Globalisation and Pedagogy: Space, place, identity*, London: Routledge
- Edwards, R., Nicoll, K. and Lee, A. (2002) 'Flexible literacies, distributed learning and changing educational spaces', in M. Lea and K. Nicoll (eds) *Distributed Learning: Social and Cultural Approaches to Practice*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Eraut, M. (2000) Non-formal learning, implicit learning and tacit knowledge in professional work, in F. Coffield (ed)
- Farrell, L. (2000) Ways of doing, ways of being: language, education and 'working' identities, *Language and Education* 14, 1: 18-36.
- Foster, K. (2000) *Adult literacy in Scotland: Analysis of data from the 1996 Adult Literacy Survey*. London: Office for National Statistics.
- Gee, J. (1996) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in discourses (2nd Edition)*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Gorard, S. and Rees, G. (2002) *Creating a Learning Society? Learning Careers and Policies for Lifelong Learning*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Hamilton, M. & Barton, D. The International Adult Literacy Survey: What Does it Really Measure? *International Review of Education*, 46, 377-389, 2000.
- Ivanič, R. (1998) *Writing and Identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jones, C., Turner, J. and Street, B. (eds.) (2000) *Students Writing in the University: Cultural and epistemological Issues*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Lankshear, C. (1998) Meanings of literacy in contemporary educational reform proposals, *Educational Theory*, 48, 3, 351-372
- Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lea, M and Street, B (1998) Student writing in higher Education: An academic literacies approach, *Studies in Higher Education*, 23, 2, 157-172.
- Lea, M. and Stierer, B. (eds.) (2000) *Student Writing in Higher Education: New contexts*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Lillis, T. (2001) *Writing in Higher Education: Access, regulation and desire*. London: Routledge.
- McIntyre, D. and McIntyre, A. (nd) Capacity for Research into Teaching and Learning: Final Report, Cambridge: University of Cambridge, School of Education.
- Morgan, W. (1999) Digital rhetorics and beyond: research and practice, <http://users.wantree.com.au/~peterh/rhetoric/>
- Moser, Sir C. (1999) *Improving literacy and numeracy: A fresh start*. London: DFEE publications.
- Nespor, J. (1994) *Knowledge in Motion*, London: Falmer.
- OECD (2000) *Literacy in the Information Age: Final report of the International Adult Literacy Survey* Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Poulson, L., MacLeod, F., Bennett, N. & Wray, D. (1997) *Family Literacy: Practice in local programmes*. University of Exeter School of Education/ Basic Skills Agency.
- Prior, P. (1998). *Writing Disciplinarity: A sociohistoric account of literate activity in the academy*. Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- Scottish Office (1998) *Opportunity Scotland*. Edinburgh: HMSO.
- Scottish Executive (2000a) *Adult Literacy Employer Survey*. 2000. Edinburgh, Scottish Executive.
- Scottish Executive (2000b) *Adult Literacy in Scotland*. Edinburgh, Scottish Executive
- Street, B. (1984) *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Street, B. (1995) *Social Literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. London: Longman.
- Street, B. (ed.) (2001) *Literacy and Development: Ethnographic Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- West, L. (1996) *Beyond Fragments*, London: Cassell.

TECHNICAL ANNEXES

Annexe A

User Engagement, Communication and Impact Strategy **pages 2 - 7**

Annexe B

Research Partnerships with Lancaster Literacy Research Centre **pages 8 - 9**

TECHNICAL ANNEXE A

USER ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND IMPACT STRATEGY ¹

Users have shaped this proposal and will be actively engaged as partners in all stages of the research. F.E. based research partners, other F.E. professionals, and learner-researchers are central to our communication strategy, grounding it in their own practice and the relevance of the research to it. Their involvement will contribute both to capacity-building in their own institutions and to identifying ways of transforming the understandings reached in the research into outcomes which will be relevant to practitioners in other contexts.

User Involvement in All Stages of the Research

Involvement of User Groups in Developing the Proposal

The proposed research has evolved out of established and on-going consultations and working relationships with colleagues in the F.E. sector and a range of stakeholders concerned with the interaction between literacy practices and learning. The work of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRL) is guided by an Advisory Group of public and voluntary organisations, which includes practitioners and policy makers. Widening participation and social inclusion have been identified as areas for further work. Literacy has emerged as an area which is central to these processes on which more research needs to be conducted, which has led to the partnership with the Lancaster Literacy Research Centre (LLRC).

The SFEU (Scottish Further Education Unit) have been in close consultation with Stirling on the design of the project and has facilitated discussions with F.E. principals in Scotland. In addition to directly supporting the initial pilot project undertaken by an F.E. practitioner that will inform the proposed investigation, SFEU has expressed strong interest in funding future small-scale projects related to the present study. In England, the Director of Research and Research Manager at LSDA (Learning and Skills Development Agency) have been consulted over the direction, significance and design of the research. From this, the applicants have developed a common framework through which to approach this area of research with partner organisations. College Principals and several members of staff have advised directly on the purposes and partnership arrangements they envisage for conducting this research in their institutions.

Existing Relations with Potential Users, including Students

The research will benefit from a range of existing research and practice networks and activities. At Stirling, Breen and Edwards have a well-developed network through CRL of existing relations with stakeholders including 'client' groups, FE providers, employers and workplace providers. At Lancaster, recent consultations conducted for the National Centre for Research and Development in Adult Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL have established a network of practitioners in a variety of post-compulsory settings in the North west of England allowing for fruitful cross-sector communication, including but not limited to Further Education. The Workplace Basic Skills Network is based at Lancaster, providing a ready-made network of client groups within which to embed the research. In addition, Barton and Ivanic are founder members of the Research and Practice in Adult Literacy Group which has since 1985 maintained communications between learners, tutors and researchers in Adult Literacy, and encouraged and supported practitioner-research in the field. The investigation we undertake will be highly pertinent to

¹ We are particularly grateful to Andrew Morris, Research Manager at LSDA, and Carolyn Davidson, Research and Development Project Manager at SFEU, for advice which has informed the development of this strategy.

these parties, and we intend to work with them as immediate partners in the research, as members of the Steering Committee, and to advise us on building a strategy for impact for the research (see below).

Involvement of Learners and Teachers in the Research Process

F.E. based research partners are central to our research design both in terms of the contribution they will make to the quality of findings and in terms of capacity-building for evidence-based practice. The research partnership with F.E. staff will engage them in literacy ethnographies, in experimental interventions in the FE sector, and further work with additional colleagues during the *Intervention Phase*, as described in detail in the proposal. We will expect all of them to be involved equally in all phases of our research, including dissemination activities.

The samples of students in the four F.E. research sites will also be crucial collaborators in the research. Both Phases 2 and 3 of the research directly engage them in the process. Working closely with the research team in each site, they will collect, provide and interpret data on informal and formal literacy practices. They will provide feedback on the analyses and our interpretations of data. Student input to the exploration of their own practices and especially those emergent new literacies they are confronting in their daily lives will be central to the project. They will also contribute to the evaluation the *Intervention Phase* particularly in terms of its direct benefits to their learning. Because the intervention will focus upon those border literacies that they have helped to specify, their participation in, and assessment of, the process will have a direct impact upon the principles for future design of similar interventions across the sector.

Steering Committee

The project will be supported by a Steering Committee who will meet with members of the team at regular intervals throughout every Phase to review the direction, progress and outcomes of the investigation. It will be made up of a full range of stakeholders including F.E. management, staff and student representatives, and representatives from LSDA and SFEU and local employers.

Communication and Impact Strategy

User involvement as outlined above will be the basis for our communication and impact strategies.

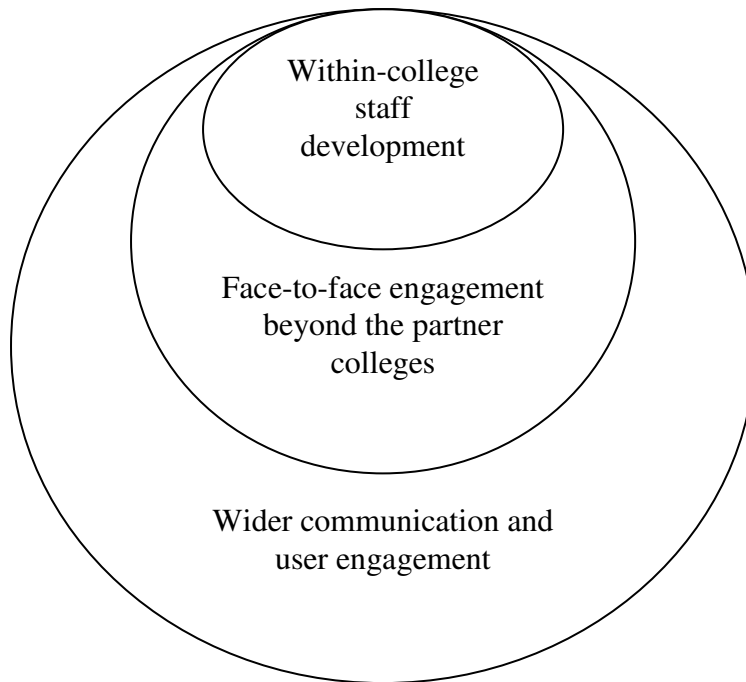
Our overall communication purposes are:

- (a) To contribute to the wider pedagogic engagement of those border literacy practices that benefit learning outcomes in F.E. and the life course.
- and
- (b) To inform and enable cross-sector research partnerships and F.E. practitioner research beyond the project itself.

At the end of the three main Phases of the research, the process and its outcomes will be disseminated within the research sites, across the F.E. sector in both countries, and within the TLRP Programme. Staff research partners in each college and across all four colleges, the additional F.E. staff involved in the intervention programme, collaborating students and the project Steering Committee will be participants in the communication strategy. They will contribute to identifying ways of transforming the understandings reached in the project into outcomes which will be relevant to staff and students in their own and other similar contexts. This process will inform research and curriculum innovation capacity across the sector.

Our communication and impact strategy can be expressed diagrammatically in terms of ever-increasing circles, as in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Communication and Impact Strategy



The figure indicates how within-college staff development activities provide the starting-point for achieving increasingly wider impact of the research. Each of the elements in Figure 1 is described in more detail below.

Within-College Staff Development

As part of the process of developing the proposal, partner colleges have already committed themselves to building this research into their on-going quality enhancement and professional development activities. Senior staff will ensure that there are opportunities for the researchers to contribute to staff development programmes within colleges, to disseminate their experiences to colleagues, and to implement new developments that may result. Within-college communication and impact activities will accompany each phase of the research, with different findings, processes and issues being the focus of attention for each phase.

The approach to achieving impact within partner colleges involves the interaction with colleagues set out in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A recontextualisation model for achieving impact

- a) Research partners share their situated processes and findings with immediate colleagues.
- b) They invite them to identify similarities and differences between the research sites and their own teaching situations.
- c) They invite them to recontextualise the processes and findings of the research by planning and undertaking similar investigations and interventions in their own subject areas, with the assurance of support from college systems.
- d) Colleagues enter into a dialogue over what works and what doesn't work, and the effects of different contexts on this.

Face-to-Face Engagements Beyond the Partner Colleges

The within-college staff development activities and approaches will provide a basis for achieving impact on users beyond the partner institutions. To achieve impact beyond the partner colleges is more demanding, since there is no institutional commitment to the process. However, the work will be greatly facilitated by the mediation and support of local and national networks for the FE sector: CRLI and SFEU in Scotland; LLRC and LSDA in England.

Discussion fora

The CRLI has existing expertise in contributing to evidence-informed debates among practitioners and policy-makers through its Scottish Forums for Lifelong Learning. These events attract between 100 and 150 colleagues three times per year and focus on particular educational issues in post-compulsory education and training. Three such events at the end of the three major Phases of the research will be given over to the project for interaction on emerging outcomes. The LLRC runs a discussion group, and this project will be its focus at least once in each year of its operation.

User engagement workshops

It is an essential part of our communication and impact strategy to meet with potential users of the research and invite them to consider the value of recontextualising the research into their own situations. We intend to offer at least two workshops for practitioners in different parts of the country in each of Years 2 and 3 of the project. The model for such workshops will be similar to that shown in Figure 2, except that at stage (c) support will be provided by the project website. In this way an increasing network of users will be able to provide feedback to us and to each other as to the ways in which different contextual factors affect the research processes, findings, and implications. As venues for these workshops, in Scotland the SFEU will support project members' participation in regular meetings of existing networks that are hosted by the SFEU focusing upon research by F.E. staff. In England, LSDA has similarly offered its collaboration and the use of its Learning and Skills Research Network for setting up regional workshops. This project will contribute directly to North West Regional Learning and Skills Development Agency activities concerned with engaging practitioners in evidence-based practice.

Wider communication and engagement

In this category we include those forms of communication which will reach a larger range and number of users without direct face-to-face contact, but nevertheless be intended to engage users and achieve impact on the work of practitioners and learners. The Steering Committee will be pivotal in shaping and implementing on-going strategies for widespread communication of the research process and its findings particularly to the wider community, to employers and through the media.

Project Website

The project will develop a website to communicate with those involved in life course learning research, policy and practice. This will be hosted on the website of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning at Stirling with a link from Lancaster drawing upon our prior experience of providing resources and hosting interactive online discussion. This will be a particularly important element in our user engagement strategy in that it will be a means of supporting practitioners beyond the immediate research partnership (those who have attended workshops or conferences, or read articles about the research) who want to build upon and develop the research processes and/or the implications of the findings by applying them in their own contexts.

Conferences

As part of its commitment to this project, the SFEU proposes to host a national briefing day in Autumn 2003, and other such dissemination events throughout the life of the project. Project members would also contribute to the Annual Conference of SFEU. In England, LSDA has similarly offered its collaboration and its Learning and Skills Research Network conference for dissemination purposes.

Academic papers will be presented at selected national and international conferences in applied linguistics, literacy and educational research in order to discuss and refine the theoretical underpinnings of the research, disseminate its findings, and increase its impact on the research community.

Publications

Regular updates and short articles about the research will be submitted for inclusion in Learning and Skills Research and to the TLRP Newsletter Teaching and Learning, in order to keep colleagues informed about the progress of the research and to consult them on issues arising. Scholarly outputs on specific aspects of the research will be submitted to appropriate academic journals, and we envisage that the research will generate one or possibly more publications for different readers and users.

TLRP Cross-Programme Meetings

In order to maximise cross-fertilization between TLRP projects, researchers for this project will meet with members of related project teams. These meetings will ensure that our work is complementary and contribute to the wider communication of processes, findings and issues arising for all concerned. We will initiate up to two such meetings, and we will take advantage of any such opportunities offered by the programme. In addition we expect to contribute to the TLRP Annual Conferences in the 2004 – 2006.

Mass Media

Given the project's focus upon both vernacular and newly emergent literacy practices in the wider society, there will be significant media interest in the study because the industry directly calls upon, shapes, and seeks to exploit the literacy practices of people of all ages. On this basis, we aim to engage local and national media in appropriate ways in the key Phases of the research.

Outputs to Achieve Communication and Impact

At the end of the three main Phases of the research, the process and its outcomes will be disseminated within the research sites, across the F.E. sector in both countries, and within the TLRP Programme. Staff research partners in each college and across all four colleges, the additional F.E. staff involved in the intervention programme, collaborating students and the project Steering Committee will be participants in the communication strategy. Table 1 (*overleaf*) gives an indication of the sorts of outputs we will aim to produce at different stages in the research.

Table 1: Time-plan of Proposed Outputs

Date	Event	Research Output
Autumn 2003	National briefing day in Scotland hosted by SFEU	Presentation and workshop about proposed research
December 2003	LSDA Annual Conference of the Learning and Skills Research Network	Presentation and workshop about proposed research, plus article in Learning and Skills Research journal.
June – Sept 2004	In-college workshops	Materials for communication and impact re. Processes and findings from Phase 1, and consultation about Phase 2.
July – Sept 2004	End of Phase 1 National or international conference(s) (including BAAL and/or BERA)	Presentation, and associated academic journal article about literacy mapping in FE colleges.
Sept 2004	TLRP Annual Conference	Paper, if invited, on literacy as a factor in enhancing learning outcomes in F.E.
Nov - Dec 2004	LSDA Annual Conference of the Learning and Skills Research Network, and follow-up regional workshops	Presentation and workshop materials about initial experiences of research partnerships and literacy data collection; Article in Learning and Skills Research journal about proposed research processes, inviting colleagues to adapt to their own contexts and communicate through the website.
March - April 2005	National or international conference(s)	Presentation, and associated academic journal article presenting case studies and emerging analytical framework for the identification of border literacy practices.
June – Sept 2005	In-college workshops	Materials for communication and impact re. Processes and findings from Phase 2 and consultation about Phase 3.
July – Dec 2005	Designing interventions	Draft materials for interventions.
July – Sept 2005	End of Phase 2 National or international conference(s)	Presentation, and associated academic journal article on evaluation of research partnership model for Phase 2.
Sept 2005	TLRP Annual Conference	Paper, if invited, on emerging findings from Phase 2 regarding border literacy practices, identities and learning.
Dec 2005	LSDA Annual Conference of the Learning and Skills Research Network	Paper, and associated article for Learning and Skills Research journal on moving from research findings to designing interventions.
March - April 2006	National or international conference	Presentation, and associated academic journal article on mobilising border literacy practices; Publication proposals for different readerships submitted.
June – Sept 2006	In-college workshops	Materials for communication and impact re. Processes and findings from Phase 3.
July 2006	End of Phase 3	Finalised materials for interventions; Publication proposals agreed, and writing underway.
July – Sept 2006	National or international conference(s)	Paper, and associated academic journal article on research partnerships and knowledge transformation.
Sept 2006	TLRP Annual Conference	Paper, if invited, on design, implementation and evaluation of interventions
Dec 2006	LSDA Annual Conference of the Learning and Skills Research Network	Paper and associated article for Learning and Skills Research journal on literacy for learning in FE.
Dec 2006	Project completion	Final Report to ESRC underway.

TECHNICAL ANNEXE B

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS WITH LANCASTER LITERACY RESEARCH CENTRE

(General version - DRAFT)

THE IDEA OF RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Practitioner involvement in literacy research means that practitioners have an active role in developing knowledge and understanding about literacy. It is a means whereby organizations can build capacity to carry out research and reflective practice in the field of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL. The involvement of practitioner-researchers ensures that the work done is relevant, geared to the needs of adult learners and that its value is recognized by teachers.

Practitioners work as partners with academic researchers on funded projects researching various aspects of literacy. They conduct interviews and investigations with groups of learners, are involved in the interpretation and analysis of data, feed back their work to colleagues in their work-place, and contribute to the wider dissemination of findings of the research. They have important contributions to make in decision making at each stage of the research process; aims, methodology, data collection, interpretation and dissemination, since they are the ones most affected by the outcomes of the research, and by the processes by which data is collected.

WHAT THE PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH PARTNER WILL DO

Research partners will generally be appointed in groups of two or more from the same institution. They will:

- attend an introduction day at Lancaster university;
- attend regular meetings of the group at Lancaster university or other agreed location in the region;
- have the opportunity to complete a credit-bearing module on action-research/reflective practice;
- undertake research which contributes to a specific project in collaboration with project staff;
- participate in other short training courses as required related to the research project secondment;
- design a personal development plan and discuss this at intervals with their research mentor;
- keep a research/learning diary about the research process and write a report based on this at the end of their secondment;
- disseminate their experience to colleagues within the organisation in which they work;
- take part in national workshops at which they will disseminate their experiences and findings to other practitioners.

Research partners will be encouraged to register for higher degrees, diplomas and research degrees, in order to develop their research skills and further their continuing professional development. The research work they carry out during their appointment to a project would contribute to their degree studies.

WHAT THE PARTNER INSTITUTION WILL DO

In order to embed the work of the researchers in providing organizations, there must be a commitment to their work, and to the project to which they are seconded, through:

- Making available adequate resources to the researchers carry out their work (e.g.- protection of release time, provision of consumables, computer access, space for onsite project meetings,);
- Ensuring that there are opportunities for the researchers to contribute to staff development programmes within colleges, to disseminate their experiences to colleagues, and to implement new developments that may result;
- Taking an active interest in the research project being carried out in the organization, through attendance of senior members at meetings, reading of research reports and participation in decision-making and helping with dissemination of findings as appropriate.

WHAT THE HOST UNIVERSITY WILL PROVIDE

The university will host a small group of practice-based researchers (minimum 2, maximum 8) and will act as a resource and information centre, meeting place and source of research expertise.

- Provide mentoring support, including virtual and face-to-face group meetings, individual tutorials;
- Provide project supervision for research secondment;
- Provide training in research methods;
- Provide Meeting/study space and access to computer facilities;
- Provide library access;
- Organise dissemination events around the country in consultation with the research partners.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

Members of staff in institutions which have already been identified as research partners for a specific project can apply for research secondments. The position is intended for experienced practitioners, in full-time or substantial part-time posts. They should have at least a first degree or equivalent in a relevant area.

HOW WILL PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCHERS BE FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED?

Practice-based researchers will be supported by fellowships, paid either to their employing institution to release them from work or directly to them if they are in part-time employment. The nature of these fellowships will vary from project to project, but a current example is a fellowship of one day per working week for a year (approx. £6000). In addition, research expenses such as travel and fieldwork costs will be covered by the project. Fees for enrolment on a research training module may also be paid.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for Research Partnerships must include

- 2 referees, who can testify to the potential of applicant as a researcher;
- A statement from the applicant about why they want this fellowship and how it fits into their career.

Applications must be accompanied by a statement from the individual's employing organization about the resources they will make available to the research partner, the ways in which their research will be embedded in the workplace, and the commitment of the organisation to the work of the project to which the research partner is seconded.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT:

Roz Ivanič , Lancaster Literacy Research Centre.

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY, LA1 4YT

Tel: 01524 593032 Email: r.ivanic@lancaster.ac.uk