Annotated Bibliography August 6 # 2

1- Bratton, J. A. (2001). Why workers are reluctant learners: The case of the Canadian pulp and paper industry. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 13*(7), 333-344.

Based on consultations with employer and union representatives, a postal survey and in-depth interviews with employers and workers, this paper discusses worker education as a paradox centred around productivity and control of employment. The author asserts that the learning model of workplace education presents a dilemma to unions by individualizing the employment relationship, changing the structure of work groups and the nature of work and by changing the balance of commitment to union and employer. The paper discusses the interesting distinction between learning for work and learning at work and offers the conclusion that workplace educators should be including what happens at work as part of the curriculum and that workers' education should encourage critical inquiry of workplace issues.

The value of this paper is in its recognition of the inevitable paradoxes workers, unions and employers face in workplace education programmes.

2- Demetrion, G. (1998). A Critical Pedagogy of the Mainstream. *Adult Basic Education, 8*(2), 68 - 90.

This papers offers discussion that bridges both theory and personal observations of the transformative capacity of adult education. By adopting the stance that adult education is a self-actualizing experience, Demetrion places himself in the arena of critical literacy theorists, arguing that process rather than content is the most meaningful feature of adult education for learners and that the consequence of the acquisition of skills through learning leads learners to greater inclusion in society and to activities that foster self actualization through greater symbolic imagination.

By linking both theory and personal stories, the author creates a convincing argument for the transformational function of literacy, assuming it has key role in the development of democratic participation and, as such, this paper offers a valuable illustration of critical literacy perspective.

3- Fawcett, A. A. (2003). The International Adult Literacy Survey in Britain: Impact on policy and practice. *Dyslexia, 9*(1), 99 -121.

Offering an uncritical perspective of the IALS, this paper describes the breakdown of results of the survey for adults with self-reported learning disabilities who constitute a high percentage of Levels 1 and 2. Following discussion of some key statistical findings of IALS as they relate to people with learning disability, the paper describes policy changes recommended in the Moser report and then, interestingly, reports a case study in which IALS was used to assess progress in prose literacy with a group of students attending Colleges of Further Education and Local Education Authorities in England and Wales, over a period of 2 years. While the authors noted that 50% of the group made progress commensurate with the level required to achieve Moser Report literacy targets, the assessed skills of a third of the students seemed to

regress over this time. The paper suggests that screening diagnoses for learning disability and interventions that target and develop the individual aspirations of students will be effective in improving the prose skills of adults with learning disabilities.

By omitting discussion of the validity of IALS, this paper provides a useful illustration of the practical application of the results.

4- Frank, F. (1996). *'Like a cork flying out of a bottle': Students' learning journeys after Workplace Basic Skills Training course a follow up study.* Lancaster: Department for Education and Employment. Retrieved August 8, 2004 from World Wide Web:
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/edres/staff/frank/followup.html

In this highly readable paper, Frank describes changes, five years on, in both the lives of learners and in the organizations in which they originally complete work based courses. By describing both the changes to learners and the companies, Frank presents a paper that demonstrates the interwoven patterns between adult education initiatives, economic changes and business decisions.

Although acknowledging that the interview population was skewed because of difficulties in follow up contact, excerpts from interviews with learners offer authentic insights into the barriers experienced in pursuing further learning, the perceptions of education courses offered on work sites and the impact of learning on learners' lives subsequently.

5- Frank, F. (2003). Learning to accentuate the positive. *Adults Learning, 14*(8), 18-21.

In this interesting and highly accessible paper, Frank challenges figures reporting the monetary losses to the economy through poor literacy skills suggesting that these are both misleading and also that they are failing to register with employers. The author details one study from which statistics have been generated, noting that although only 4% of medium to large employers reported inadequate literacy skills in their workforce, a much larger proportion reported a lack of skills in management, communication, computer literacy and motivation. The author asserts that there is a need for employers to recognize and understand the language of literacy, for example understanding literacy as the skills required in specific contexts. She concludes that there is a gap between employers' engagement with the language of literacy and their ability to recognize the benefits of adult education in their businesses.

The pragmatic focus of this paper, combined with carefully constructed points of evidence, makes this valuable paper from both the perspective of employers and employees.

6- Hamilton, M., & Barton, D. (2000). The International Adult Literacy Survey: What does it really measure? *International Review of Education, 46*(5), 377-389.

In this detailed, carefully constructed paper, Hamilton and Barton examine the validity of the claims of the IALS from a social constructivist perspective and conclude that the survey is 'enactive' i.e. that it is a tool to support existing policy decisions. The main deficiencies that the authors identify are in the limited vision of literacy, the view of literacy as a set of skills and in the assumption that the test items can successfully transfer across cultures. In discussing how some items in IALS have produced different figures to their own research carried out repeatedly over a number of years, the authors identity the broad sweep approach of IALS that necessitates a limited number of items covering each particular aspect of literacy as providing an inadequate understanding of the meaning of literacy in the lives of survey participants. The authors conclude that IALS has failed to produce a meaningful comparison of literacy between countries, has been limited in its goal of understanding the relationship between literacy and economic indicators but has, by the power of the institutions that have supported this survey and by the research budget it has commanded, significantly influenced policy beyond a level that is justifiable by its research validity.

This paper is an important paper because of the influence IALS has had on the field of adult literacy and its central role in the debate that perceives literacy as set of skills and literacy as a socially constituted activity. The thorough argument that Hamilton and Barton present is well supported and serves to construct this paper as a strong piece of academic writing in the field of adult literacy.

7- Jarvis, C. (2001). Travellers' tales: From adult education to lifelong learning...and beyond. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 33*(2), 95-99.

While fuller referencing would have made this paper considerably more useful, it nevertheless provides an important summary of the research approaches taken by authors of papers at the 2001 SCUTREA (Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research on the Education of Adults) conference. The author identifies the discursive approaches that appeared to have been dominant at this gathering. Of particular note was the positioning of the researchers themselves in their research and the reflection of their awareness of presence in the style of the papers presented through, for example, the use of auto/biography and reflective analysis of insider-outsider status. The paper notes the dominance of qualitative empirical papers and comments that the research community in the field of adult education appears to have rejected large-scale quantitative studies in favour of narrative and qualitative studies.

This paper raises an important question about the role of theory and policy in education and whether the postmodern climate of research in adult education is inhibiting researchers' from generic models.

8- Johnston, R., & Usher, R. (1997). Re-theorising experience: Adult learning in contemporary social practices. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 29(2), pp. 137 – 150.

This paper offers a fresh approach to the conceptualisation of adult learning by examining the distinction between experience and knowledge within four key educational discourses. Arguing that knowledge has been privileged over experience, the authors place adult learning within a postmodern context to examine how experience can be acknowledged as more relevant to learners in a consumer society. The important question that this paper raises is whether education remains assuming a role in attempting to 'transcend' experience into knowledge, while learners may be more immersed in and acted upon by the incoherent, fragmented experiences of postmodernism.

This is a paper that positions itself as offering a different conceptual framework for future research in adult learning and is a well supported argument that offers valuable research potential.

9- Lonsdale, M., & McCurry, D. (2004). *Literacy in the New Millenium*. Adelaide: NCVER. Retrieved August 2, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1490.html

This well structured and presented report is based on a literature review of work in the field of adult literacy since 1990, and consultation with a small group of stakeholders whose perspectives have shaped the discussion paper. Written to promote debate over the meaning and role of literacy in Australia, this report covers a broad range of the significant influences in the field, supported by the literature, and directs its summary to various stakeholders in the adult literacy arena e.g. providers, policy-makers and literacy assessors.

Both the broad sweep of the papers and the extensive bibliography offer valuable foundation reading in the area of adult education.

10 -Mezirow, J. (1996). Toward a learning theory of adult literacy. *Adult Basic Education, 6*(3), 115-126.

An interesting paper in the debate on the role of culture and social context in the constitution of meaning for literacy, this paper presents transformative learning as a model that accommodates individual frames of reference for learning experiences in contexts that are dictated by culture and situations. The paper draws on various theoretical models including reading comprehension and communication, to suggest that the ideal conditions for critical discourse provide the base upon which learning goals and teaching practice can be established.

Although rather theoretical in is approach, this paper nevertheless adds to the debate on the function of adult literacy.

11- Payne, J. (2002). *Basic skills in the workplace a research review*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency. Retrieved August 8, 2004 from the World Wide Web:http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/socialinclusion/adults/benefits.html#Basic

By combining both an overview of research in adult workplace basic skills and an annotated bibliography, this research report offers itself as an extremely useful guide to access the current literature on adult workplace education research. The report covers the contexts and approaches to workplace basic skills education, basic themes in the research and writing , the effectiveness of basic skills programmes, the writing and purpose of papers related to workplace skills and the future research needs and, within each of these sections, presents a well-referenced summary of the current research. The annotated bibliography concentrates on research post the 1998, Holland, Frank and Cooke annotated bibliography, *Literacy and the New Work Order.*

 Useful not only for its content, this report also provides a model for organizing the quantity and range of written material in the field of workplace skills.

12- Rossiter, M. (1999). A narrative approach to development: Implications for adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 50*(1), 54-71.

Beginning by questioning the usefulness of stage and phase models of development, the author presents narrative as a model that offers rich understanding of the experience of adult education. Key aspects of narrative construction, namely narrative knowing, meaning, temporality, development and interconnection are described and the implications of these for adult education programmes are outlined, with the author suggesting that the role of autobiographical learning is integral to learning programmes. Developing from this conclusion, the paper adds that the learning process is one that implicates participants in a relational teaching/learning partnership and as such this paper offers refreshing insights into the nature of learning and the narrative perspective for research.

The value of this paper is in presenting a research approach that moves the recognition of situated learning from an object of research focus to an integral part of the research process itself, through a narrative approach.

13- St. Clair, R. (2002). Stemming criterion bleed: Evaluating literacy education in its own terms. *Adult Basic Education,12*(2), 67- 81.

The author examines the idea that vocational literacy has encroached on adult literacy education with the result that the evaluation expectations of one have become too entwined in the processes of the other, a process that is identified as 'criterion bleeding.' The author challenges the view that education is directed to economic goals and asserts that adult education should primarily be the means to ensure adults can participate in a democracy.

14- Silva, T., Cahalan, M., & Lacireno- Paquet, N. (1998). *Adult education participation decisions and barriers: Review of conceptual frameworks and empirical studies* (No. 98-10): U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Development. Retrieved from World Wide Web http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/9810.pdf

While the purpose of this report is to offer analysis of questions in the NHES (National Household Education Survey), by describing nine frameworks that are relevant to conceptualizing adult education research, the report offers useful insights into the approaches to adult education research. The frameworks described: economic, social-psychological; leisure and recreational, health, adult education /interdisciplinary, theories of change, student attrition, time allocation and consumer behaviour all offer perspectives on the issue of adult participation in education. The report then presents summaries of these approaches and analyses NHES questions in relation to these frameworks.

By being both theory and statistically rich in content, this report provides a useful document on which to base further research adult education participation.