

4- McIntosh, S. & Vignoles, A. (2001). Measuring and assessing the impact of basic skills on labour market outcomes. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 3, 453-481.

Following a broad discussion covering the nature of literacy assessment with preference to the particular challenges that the IALS presents, the authors describe the statistically measured relationship between literacy and specific outcomes such as income and likelihood of employment. Findings suggest literacy gains have greater effects for women than men at IALS levels 1, while overall, increases in literacy leads to increases in wages and improved likelihood of being employed.

While the paper concentrates on a restricted range of IALS levels only, it is useful for both the discussion on literacy measurement and the comparative statistical analysis that it presents describing the effects of literacy.

5- Graff, H. J., Street, B. V., & Jones, S. (1997). *Working Papers on Literacy*. Retrieved 16 November, 2004, from [http://www.nald.ca/province/que/litcent/Publication\\_Products/working/cover.htm](http://www.nald.ca/province/que/litcent/Publication_Products/working/cover.htm)

This document contains three important papers that present criticism and response to criticism of the IALS. In the first of these papers, *The persisting power and costs of the Literacy Myth*, Graff draws attention to the rhetoric of fear in discussion of literacy, the lack of integration of key research in to the IALS analysis and the inadequate recognition of the importance of contexts in the assessment of literacies. *Literacy, Economy and Society: A Review*, a paper by Street offers an extensive examination of key aspects of IALS, criticizing its emphasis on deficits and its privileging of some kinds of knowledge as superior to others. Street offers examples of questions used in IALS which clearly demonstrate the potential for confounding effects through language use and cultural bias and suggests the reports of IALS data fail to adequately acknowledge the unchallenged assumptions within the survey design and in so doing perpetuate power relationships inherent in Western discourse. The final paper in this document *Ending the myth of the 'Literacy Myth'* by Stan Jones, presents a reply to the criticisms of Graff and Street, based on the pragmatic proposition that their views represents an approach to the study of literacy that has not been helpful in offering insights or advancing policy around adult literacy. In a carefully constructed reply, Jones uses statistical data to support the relationships between literacy and economic performance described through IALS and asserts that Street and Graff's criticism of IALS, as failing to recognize the context specific nature of literacy is unjustifiably used against the survey which is, Jones argues, testing the situationally specific literacy that is closely associated with social and economic wellbeing.

These three papers, presenting detailed criticism and response to the IALS, offer an extremely useful coverage of the nature of debate around the use and design of the OECD survey. The papers represent the dichotomy in perspectives on literacy; one perspective that views literacy skills as generic and the other that views skills as socially constructed in specific situations.

6- Gomez, S. V. (2000). The Collective that Didn't Quite Collect: Reflections on the IALS. *International Review of Education*, 46(5), 419-431.

This paper challenges the design of IALS in several key aspects: the positioning of survey participants as isolated individuals; the emphasis on quantitative methods with little attention to the communication skills involved with literacy; the attention to deficits; and the ethnocentric assumptions within the survey design. The author examines IALS results from Poland and Portugal in greater detail to support the argument that IALS has limitations in its use.

This paper supports more theoretical challenges made to IALS by previous authors. The paper bases its criticism on the lack of acknowledgement of the role of cultural and social factors in the assessment of literacy.