

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> Lancaster University</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29: English Literature and Language</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b></p> <p>Literacy Research: Informing Policy and Improving Public Services</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The Literacy Research Centre works to understand the role of literacy in all areas of life and to improve communication and collaboration between researchers and educational practice. It focuses on people and contexts such as prisoners, disaffected young people, job seekers and health care settings. Its research impact includes raising awareness of user issues, making recommendations regarding changes to public services and improving educational attainment among disadvantaged groups. Its work has shaped national curricula and contributed to the development of teaching staff and other professionals, helping the government achieve its national target for adult literacy early.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>From 2002 to 2009, the Literacy Research Centre was funded by the then Department for Education and Skills as part of a national research and development consortium, the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) to support the major government initiative Skills for Life. SfL was a high profile government policy; it was regularly reviewed and achieved its targets. Professor David Barton was on the national NRDC management team and a member of the Quality Management Team, ensuring the impact on policy and practice of the research and development projects.</p> <p>Based on earlier underpinning research at Lancaster (e.g. Barton, D. &amp; M. Hamilton 1998, <i>Local Literacies</i>) and established networks (e.g. RaPAL and Workplace Basic Skills), and being part of ALPHA/UNESCO network, we were specifically included in the original consortium and seen as one of the few expert groups in the UK able to inform the development of the new policy, and possessing the networks to impact immediately on the field of practice.</p> <p>From 2002 to 2009, we carried out 25 research projects (total funding £3,009,352) at Lancaster, and produced 21 NRDC reports, as well as 12 academic and practitioner-oriented articles and 5 books. The work was led by Barton and carried out by members of the LRC including Prof. R. Ivanič, Dr. U. Papen and Dr. K. Tusting in Linguistics. The LRC is identified with: close textured research into language and everyday social practice; research that is focused on learners' experience; and experienced working in sensitive areas, such as health, offenders and homelessness; plus a 25 year track record of linking research and practice. We work with a coherent theory of impact, starting with local activities and moving out to regional and national in order to have an effect on policy, and involving stakeholders in all stages of a participatory research process.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling literacy and ESOL teachers/managers to review and improve the way health is integrated as a topic in their teaching (e.g. how students manage the language and literacy demands of health care) (Report 2, below);</li> <li>• Engaging new learners, based on supporting practitioners to carry out their own projects to improve their practice (Report 3);</li> <li>• Improving the literacy levels of young offenders (Report 7);</li> <li>• Enabling more people in the Skills for Life priority groups to access education including homeless people (Report 1);</li> <li>• Enabling disaffected young people and other 'at risk' groups to engage and progress in education (Report 5);</li> </ul>

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- Improving teaching methods, particularly by demonstrating the effectiveness of embedding language and literacy work in other learning (Report 6);
- Improving teaching and support for speakers of other languages learning English, by drawing on their existing knowledge and improving the social support for their learning (Report 5).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Underpinning research outputs include:

1. D. Barton & M. Hamilton, *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998. (2983 copies sold, as of July 2012. 1684 citations on Google scholar, Apr 2013. Republished as Routledge Linguistics Classic 2012.)
2. D. Barton, R. Ivanič, Y. Appleby, R. Hodge & K. Tusting, *Literacy, Lives and Learning*. Routledge, 2007. (584 copies sold. 67 citations)
3. D. Barton, *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994. Second edition 2007. (9400 copies sold. 1597 citations)
4. U. Papen, *Adult Literacy as Social Practice: More than Skills*. Routledge, 2005. (1047 copies sold. 97 citations)
5. K. Tusting & D. Barton, *Models of Adult Learning*. Leicester: NIACE, 2006. (1725 copies sold. 52 citations)
6. R. Ivanič, R. Edwards, D. Barton, M. Martin-Jones, Z. Fowler, B. Hughes, G. Mannion, K. Miller, C. Satchwell & J. Smith. (2009) *Improving Learning in College: Rethinking Literacies across the Curriculum*. London: Routledge. (548 copies sold. 41 citations.)

NRDC reports aimed at policy and practice. All project reports were part of a peer review process whereby they were reviewed by at least 2 academic reviewers, 2 practitioners and the Strategy Unit before publication. Examples of the reports are listed in section 5 for corroboration purposes.

#### Grants funded by Department for Education and Skills:

Principal Investigator	Title	Award £	Period
David Barton	NLRC – Ethnographic Project	730,000	Apr02–Mar05
David Barton	NLRC – Central Management Costs	437,000	Jan02–Mar08
Mary Hamilton	NLRC – Teacher Researcher Programme Model	42,460	Sep02–Mar05
Mary Hamilton	NLRC – Educational Research MA Development	77,000	Jan02–Sep02
Uta Papen	Literacy and Health	135,730	Oct03–Jul06
Murray Saunders	NLRC – Skills for Life	384,000	Oct03–Mar 05

#### Grants funded by National Literacy Research Centre:

David Barton	Practitioner Guides	81,865	Jun05–Mar07
David Barton	Creating a resource for Policy Practitioners and Researchers	127,319	May05–Mar07
Mary Hamilton	Practitioner Projects	317,663	Oct03–Aug06

#### Grants funded by the ESRC:

Roz Ivanič	Literacies for Learning in FE	804,867	Jan04–Aug08
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**Impact case study (REF3b)****4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Research carried out at the Lancaster Literacy Research Centre, 2002-2009, has had a major impact on the government's Skills for Life (SfL) policy and practice. 21 reports are aimed primarily at the English SfL strategy, where they are used in teacher training and professional development and circulated across government departments. The impact of these included changes to public service practices/guidelines and/or improved educational attainment among disadvantaged groups (for example, the Public Service Agreement target for adult literacy was met two years early; see: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmpubacc/154/154.pdf>, p.9). Overall, in the period Jan 2008-Aug 2012, there have been 67,226 downloads of NRDC publications to which Lancaster personnel have contributed. More specifically, they have had impact in the following ways:

**Adult Literacy in England**

- Our work has a central role in the revised adult National Curricula for England both for Literacy and for English for Speakers of Other Languages and national revisions of the subject specifications for teacher training. Our underpinning research books are listed as core reading in curriculum guidance documents, and referred to in training materials for teacher training and professional development and teacher handbooks produced since 2008 (such as Reference 9, below).
- We have made direct contributions to professional development and practice in the SfL workforce. Since 2008 we have run practitioner events aimed at specific target groups including practitioners working with offenders and working with homeless people. We contributed to major evaluations of SfL that impacted on the quality of public policy delivery and future targets (Report 4).
- Prof Hamilton was a commissioner on the inquiry into adult literacy in England, *Work, Society and Lifelong Literacy*, headed by Lord Boswell, which reported in September 2011.

**Impact on international adult literacy**

- Internationally our work is drawn upon in the UNESCO Decade of Literacy and the Literacy and Assessment Monitoring Programme (LAMP), most recently in the reports *The Global Literacy Challenge* (UNESCO Paris 2009) and *The next generation of literacy statistics* (UNESCO Institute of Statistics 2009) (See report 8).
- In the period 2008-2012 we have addressed teacher groups and policy makers in Ireland, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany and Norway. (Testimonials on file which were collected in August 2012 confirm the influence of our contributions to practitioner events and publications in Canada and Australia.)
- The German ministry for education and research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung) has funded a project 2009-2012 at the Bundeswehrhochschule, Hamburg (the University of the Federal Armed Forces) based on underpinning research output 1, above, to develop new ideas for adult literacy and basic education curricula and programmes. (Corroborating evidence 10, below)

**Impact on Further Education**

The parallel ESRC grant reported in underpinning research output 6, above, was followed up by a DVD (<http://www.publicspace.ac.uk/projects/literacies-for-learning>) (Dec 2007) and a widely circulated briefing paper (August 2008) aimed at teachers, along with an associated website containing pedagogical activities (<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/lflife/index.htm>). The website contains testimonials collected in 2008 on the efficacy of the video for teacher training. Further testimonials collected in August 2012, which we have on record, particularly cite the value of the DVD and the suggested activities. The UK Open University purchased 8 minutes of the video in 2010 to use on a teacher training course.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

NRDC reports aimed at policy and practice.

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Reports are available in hard copy and online.

1. A. Reisenberger, D. Barton, C. Satchwell, A. Wilson, C. Law & S. Weaver, (2009) *Engaging Homeless People, Black and Minority Ethnic and other Priority Groups in Skills for Life*. London: NRDC. (1605 downloads in the period 2008-12)
2. U. Papen and S. Walters. *Literacy, Learning and Health: Research Report*. October 2008
3. P. Davies, M. Hamilton & K. James (2007) *Maximising the Impact of Practitioner Research: A handbook of Practical Advice*. NRDC.
4. K. Tusting & D. Barton, (2007) *Programmes for Unemployed People since the 1970s: The Changing Place of Literacy, Language and Numeracy*. 58 pages.
5. D. Barton, Y. Appleby, R. Hodge, K. Tusting & R. Ivanič (2006) *Relating Adults' Lives and Learning: Participation and Engagement in Different Settings*. 40 pages. (1440 downloads in the period 2008-12)
6. H. Casey, O. Cara, J. Eldred, S. Grief, R. Hodge, R. Ivanič, T. Jupp, D. Lopez & B. McNeil. "You wouldn't expect a maths teacher to teach plastering...": *Embedding Literacy, Language and Numeracy in Post-16 Vocational Programmes – The Impact on Learning and Achievement*. November 2006. (8946 downloads in the period 2008-12)
7. J. Hurry, L. Brazier, K. Snapes & A. Wilson. *Improving the Literacy and Numeracy of Disaffected Young People in Custody and in the Community*. February 2005
8. D. Barton & U. Papen (eds.) (2005) *Linking Literacy Programmes in Developing Countries and the UK*. 100 pages. (3816 downloads in the period 2008-12)

Other publications:

9. Online Teacher Educator's handbook published by LSIS as part of the Skills for Life Support programme 2009 (see Ch 14 Challenging Assumptions, Changing Attitudes <http://archive.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=282329>). (See also Open University Press, *Teaching Adult Literacy*, 2010.)
10. C. Zeuner & A. Pabst (2011) *'Lesen und Schreiben Eroeffnen eine Neue Welt'. Literalitaet als Soziale Praxis – Eine Ethnographische Studie*. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann Verlag.

External sources to corroborate.

NRDC carried out systematic evaluation and monitoring of projects through a Quality Management Group (QMG). All research grants were initially reviewed and approved by the QMG and then by the SfL Strategy Group. The NRDC reported directly to the Department for Education and Skills SfL Strategy Unit which reported to the Cabinet Office. See NRDC Annual Reports (<http://bit.ly/1138ZPq>) and QMG meetings minutes.

See [www.nrdc.org.uk](http://www.nrdc.org.uk) for all individual reports and practitioner guides, and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills 2011 survey findings on the effectiveness of Skills for Life Strategy <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISCore/further-education-skills/docs/0-9/11-1367-2011-skills-for-life-survey-findings.pdf>