
University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ

UEA Literacy and Development Group

Biennial Report 2008-2009



UEA
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The Literacy and Development Group: an introduction

The Literacy and Development Group (<http://www.uea.ac.uk/ssf/literacy>) at the University of East Anglia was formed in 2003 with the aim of bringing together researchers working in this field and to enhance the research environment. The group provides opportunities for researchers to meet, exchange ideas and collaborate on research. Taking a 'situated literacies' approach, we aim to combine theory and practice, to engage actively with key policy institutions in the UK and internationally and to encourage cross-cultural interaction between literacy researchers and practitioners in countries of the North and South.

1. Enhancing the Research Environment – Events and Conferences 2008-9

The Literacy and Development Group plays a key role in developing opportunities for UEA staff and students to engage in discussion about education and development issues, through interaction with researchers, policy makers and practitioners from around the UK and worldwide.

Public seminar series on Education and Development

Our regular Education and Development Seminar Series at UEA (established as a cross-school EDU/DEV initiative in 2002) has continued to attract a wide audience of research students, faculty and taught Masters students from across the University. As in previous years, we have invited high profile seminar speakers from a range of institutions working in international education and development, as well as encouraging UEA colleagues to present on their research in this area.

In 2008, we developed a programme particularly intended to encourage deeper discussion of many of the topics on the international MA courses – including an introduction to comparative education and policy debates around educational inclusion. Building up to our conference on ‘Literacy Inequalities’ in September 2009, we decided to focus on related themes within the EDU/DEV seminars. The Autumn 2008 series began with Prof. Brian Street presenting a conceptual exploration of the theme, followed by seminars on particular aspects of ‘inequalities’.

From 2008 - 9, the following speakers presented in our regular seminar series:

Professor Michael Crossley, University of Bristol, ‘The place of context in Comparative and International Education’

Dr. Rafat Nabi, Visiting Fellow, UEA School of Education and Lifelong Learning, ‘Sustainable adult literacy efforts in focused districts of Pakistan’

Professor Fiona Leach, University of Sussex, ‘Researching absent voices – girls’ schooling in early 19th Century West Africa’

Prof. Brian Street, Kings College London and Visiting Professor, EDU, ‘Literacy Inequalities’.

Voldemar Tomusk, Open Society Foundation, ‘The Bologna process and the Enlightenment: A bird's view from the bottom of the slope’

Juancho Barron-Pastor (DEV), ‘Becoming researchers together: An experience of Action Research Living Theory’

Dr. Sondra Cuban, University of Lancaster, Care of Wrath: ‘The Feminisation of Skilled Migration as a Development Strategy’

Dr. Patricia Oliart, Lecturer in Latin American Studies, University of Newcastle, 'Translations of an imported reform: The 1990's World Bank 'education package' in rural Peru.

Dr. Priti Chopra, University of Greenwich, '(In)visible voices: exploring a whole organisation approach to gender and literacy'.

Dr. Pauline Rose, UNESCO, Paris, 'The 2010 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the marginalized in education'

Dr. Peggy Froerer, Brunel University, 'Education, Aspiration and Inequality in Central India'

Dr. Waheed Hammad, Visiting Fellow, School of Education and Lifelong Learning, on 'Barriers to Shared Decision-making in Egyptian Schools: Teachers' Perceptions'

Dr. Sheila Aikman, School of International Development, on 'The Rhetoric and Reality of Intercultural Bilingual Education in the Peruvian Amazon'

LDG Reading Group

In order to provide an opportunity for more informal discussion between the LDG members at UEA, a reading group was established in September 2009. Members took it in turns to facilitate a session, based on a reading of their choice: articles varied from academic literacy issues in UK higher education to micro-ethnographic accounts of literacy practices and texts outside the classroom. In the period running up to the conference, we decided to focus on articles written by some of our keynote speakers. Due to the popularity of the reading group in bringing together staff and students from both schools, we hope to run this again later in 2010. Articles discussed during our 2008/9 reading group sessions included:

'The Cultural Logic of Indigenous Perspectivism and Predation' by Lynn Mario de Souza

'Rethinking Recognition' by Nancy Fraser.

'Scholarship, experience, or both? a developer's approach to cross-cultural teaching' by Christine Asmar.

'Filling the Pot or Lighting the Fire? Cultural Variations in conceptions of pedagogy' by Su Wu

'Writing as a problem: African grassroots writing, economies of literacy, and globalization', by Jan Blommaert

'The Indian mirror: mapping representations of indigenous people in Mexico' by Juancho Barron-Pastor

'"Nondiscursive" requirements in academic publishing, material resources of periphery scholars and the politics of knowledge production' by Suresh Canagarajah

Literacy Inequalities Conference (1st – 3rd. September 2009)



Image: Prof. Lynn Mario Menezes de Souza gives his keynote presentation at the opening session, chaired by Prof. Brian Street.

The 'Literacy Inequalities' conference took place at the University of East Anglia from 1st – 3rd September 2009, organised by the UEA Literacy and Development Group. The conference brought together 80 literacy researchers, policy makers and practitioners from around the world and was timed to connect with the UN Literacy Decade mid-term review (following from LDG members' involvement). Funding from the British Academy enabled us to invite an impressive range of high quality speakers from a diversity of country backgrounds (Brazil, USA, Peru, Pakistan, Dominican Republic, New Zealand, India, South Africa) who otherwise would not have been able to attend the conference. The UEA Alumnae Fund provided bursaries for 20 research students to attend the conference free of charge, and UNESCO funded the opening session speakers.

Papers looked at literacy inequalities in a diversity of contexts, ranging from an indigenous community's experiences of government literacy programmes in Brazil, to an account of a novice writer's interactions with the editorial team of an academic journal in the USA. All the keynote presentations and the conference proceedings are available on the website: www.uea.ac.uk/ssf/literacy-conference-09. The following keynote presentations were given:

The first keynote speaker, Prof. Lynn Mario Menezes de Souza from the University of Sao Paulo, presented on ' (Dis)locating Literacy Knowledge: abandoning a view from nowhere', exploring an indigenous group's experiences in Brazil in relation to government literacy programmes.

Prof. Suresh Canagarajah from Pennsylvania State University discussed a 'novice' writer's interactions with the editorial team of an academic journal in his keynote presentation, 'The dilemmas of negotiating change in academic publishing practices'.

Prof. James Collins from the University of Albany/SUNY, explored literacy practices of children and youth in two immigrant communities in the United States in his

keynote paper 'Literacy as social reproduction and social transformation: the challenge of diasporic communities in the contemporary period'.

In his presentation, 'An ethnographic perspective on literacy inequalities; the power to name and define', Prof. Brian Street (Kings' College London) drew on theoretical debates within the field of New Literacy Studies and examples of literacy programmes to analyse the ways in which an ethnographic perspective on literacy practices can contribute to a conceptualisation of 'inequalities'.

Dr. Catherine Kell (Auckland University of Technology and University of Waikato) also took forward theoretical debates in this field with her keynote presentation, 'Literacy and the spaces-in-between: space and scale as mediators of literacy inequalities'. Based on her micro-level research in South Africa and New Zealand, she used the concept of 'recontextualisation' to develop an approach for analysing what happens when texts shift across contexts.

The conference provided a unique forum for theoretical debate about 'literacy inequalities', stimulated by contributions from the British Academy-supported speakers who had engaged in this field of research and practice for many years. LDG is currently negotiating with a journal in education and development to publish a Special Issue based on the conference.

Continuing debate through publications based on LDG's earlier workshops and conferences

LDG continues to work with participants from our previous conferences in developing high quality papers for publication.

Following the conference on 'Literacy, Identity and Social Change', we published a book and a Special Issue of of the *Journal Development Studies*. Keynote speaker from the conference, Prof. Kaushik Basu from Cornell University co-authored the book and editorial introduction with Anna Robinson-Pant and Bryan Maddox. As an established economist, Basu's editorial role complemented the anthropological expertise within our LDG team and enabled us to develop the conversations between economists and anthropologists that had been initiated at the conference. The book published by Routledge, *Literacy, identity and social change* includes the following chapters by participants at our conference, as well as an introduction by Basu, Maddox and Robinson-Pant ('Interdisciplinary approaches to literacy and development: a review of the field') and an Afterword by Brian Street:

1. Anna Robinson-Pant, Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia, '*Why literacy matters': exploring a policy perspective on literacies, identity and social change*'
2. Judy Kalman, Departamento de Investigaciones Educativas. Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados, Mexico City, '*Literacy by association: Access to reading and writing through mediation*'.
3. Mercedes Nino-Murcia, University of Iowa, '*The roots and growth of Peruvian women's writing in a Peruvian Village*'

4. Caroline Dyer, University of Leeds, *'Literacies and discourses of development among the Rabaris of Kutch, India'*
5. Dorothy Holland and Debra Skinner, University of North Carolina, *'Literacies of distinction: (Dis) Empowerment in social movements'*
6. Catherine Kell, University of Auckland, *'Making (a) difference: Literacy, agency and meaning making in housing struggles'*.
7. Virginia Zavala, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, *'Literacy campaigns and social practices of literacy: a study of Quechua-Spanish speaking women'*
8. Bryan Maddox, School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, *'Multi-disciplinary approaches to literacy: models, co-relations and causality'*
9. S. Subramanian, Madras Institute of Development Studies, *'Externality and equity in the measurement of literacy: exploring a link'*
10. Vegard Iversen and Richard Palmer-Jones, School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, *'A Matter of Methods: How Robust are Findings of a Proximate Illiteracy Effect?'*

Nitya Rao is currently guest editing a collection of papers presented at the LDG workshop on 'Education and Migration' in 2007. A Special Issue of *Compare: a journal of comparative and international education* will be published shortly, with an introductory overview on 'Migration, education and socio-mobility' by Nitya Rao, and includes contributions from presenters at the workshop.

2. Research Projects and Policy Links 2008-9

The LDG has contributed to policy-making processes in the area of literacy and international development, working in particular with UNESCO through commissioned papers and participation in expert consultations for the annual Global Monitoring Reports on Education for All. Several of our previously commissioned research papers (for instance, the LDG set of papers on 'The Benefits of Literacy' (edited by Robinson-Pant) for UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2006, and commissioned paper by Rao and Robinson-Pant on 'Adult Education for Indigenous Peoples and Minorities in Asia: A Thematic Review' for the UNESCO Bangkok CONFINTEA Conference (2003) continue to have an influence on policy debates in these areas, several years after they were produced.

In 2008-9, LDG members were engaged in the following policy-orientated research activities:

UN Literacy Decade Mid-Term Review

Based on analysis of empirical data from UNESCO surveys of literacy programmes and initiatives, particularly in LIFE countries, Bryan Maddox and Anna Robinson-Pant contributed to the research report for the mid-term Review of the UN Literacy Decade. This formed part of the Report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade presented to the UN General Assembly in 2008.

Research on Migration and Education

Nitya Rao continued her research on migration and education linkages with the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty based at the University of Sussex. Her report based on this research involvement was published earlier this year:

Rao, N, Gender Differences in Migration Opportunities, Educational Choices and Wellbeing Outcomes, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization and Poverty Research Report, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 2009, http://www.migrationdrc.org/publications/research_reports.html.

Rao, N. Lessons from India and Bangladesh, Policy Briefing Paper No. 16, January 2009, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.

This involvement had led to organisation of the LDG conference on Education and Migration in November 2007. A special issue of *Compare: a journal of comparative and international education* (see above) entitled, 'Migration, Education and Socio-Economic Mobility' will be published next year (Vol. 40:2, 2010), based on a selection of papers from the UEA conference.

Gender and education/literacy

Nitya Rao also continues to serve on the Global Advisory Committee of the UN girls' education initiative (UNGEI).

LDG responded to a tender put out by DFID-India in April 2009 for the documentation of best practices in Mahila Samakhya, a programme to empower rural women in India through education. We were amongst the five shortlisted groups, and though ultimately not successful in this bid, due largely to thin presence in the country and lack of working contacts with local governments across

Indian states, our proposal was credited for its methodology and approach to the exercise, and understanding of gender and education issues.

Literacy monitoring and evaluation

Bryan Maddox participated in a workshop in Jordan on the UNESCO Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (March 2009) and wrote a commissioned paper 'Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP): Guidelines for Conducting Ethnographic Research in Parallel to LAMP implementation'. Unesco Institute for Statistics (UIS), June 2009.

Academic literacies research and development activities

Anna Magyar and Anna Robinson-Pant conducted research and development activities for a UEA Teaching Fellowship awarded from 2007 - 8 for research on 'Addressing the needs of first year international doctoral students and their supervisors: an academic literacies approach'. Through focus groups and individual interviews with international doctoral students across the university, they have developed materials to facilitate discussion and critical reflection about intercultural learning and academic literacies within PhD courses. They are currently making a film for supervisors based on the initial research, funded by CSED, and the Dean of Students Office is using the storyboards created by the student participants in the project to produce briefing video material for new international doctoral students on arrival.

Anna Magyar and Anna Robinson-Pant have facilitated supervisor training programmes and orientation programmes for new international doctoral students within UEA based on this research and given invited presentations at other UK universities (see section 4 below for details).

As Editor of a leading journal on international and comparative education (*Compare*), Anna Robinson-Pant has been trying to find ways of overcoming the discursive and practical barriers faced by writers in the South through establishing a 'writing for publication programme' and raising awareness amongst publishers and reviewers. In 2007 funding was granted from the British Association for International and Comparative Education to pilot an annual programme to support 'new' writers (from 2007 to present). This peer mentoring programme, facilitated by Anna Magyar and Theresa Lillis (from the Open University) has been providing structured support in writing a journal article for those contributors less familiar with and experienced in publishing in UK/US-based journals. We aim to develop this intervention for new writers into a package available on the Internet in order to reach more isolated researchers in countries in the South and to disseminate the approach to other journals.

Children as decision makers in education

Following the ESRC-funded seminar series in 2007 - which brought together researchers from around the world to discuss approaches to enhancing children's participation in educational decision making, both inside schools and within their communities – Sue Cox and Anna Robinson-Pant have been working on an edited book based on case studies presented at the seminars. *Children as decision makers in education*, Cox, Dyer, Robinson-Pant, Schweisfurth (eds) will be published shortly by Continuum - this includes a chapter by Sheila Aikman based on her analysis of children's participation within Oxfam programmes. Cox and Robinson-Pant have continued their research in this area through integrating child-led research and analysis into an evaluation study in four Cambridgeshire schools on developing the global dimension (commissioned by the NGO Camfed International in 2008).

3. Future Events 2010

The biennial conference of the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) will be held on 10 – 12 September at the University of East Anglia, hosted by the Centre for Applied Research in Education. The Literacy and Development Group are currently developing a proposal to contribute a symposium on literacy and development, within the overall conference whose theme is 'Education and social justice in challenging times'.

[Visit conference website: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/ssf/baice2010>]

4. Papers presented at conferences and external events 2008-9

Sheila Aikman presented a seminar at the University of Canterbury, School of Anthropology and Conservation, entitled: 'The Rhetoric and Reality of Intercultural Bilingual Education in the Peruvian Amazon'. (December 2009)

Aikman, S., Canterbury Christ Church University, in conjunction with Centre for Development Studies, University of Leeds, Contributed to the Critical Seminar on the UNESCO Global monitoring report 2010 'Reaching and Teaching the Marginalised', July 6-7, 2009

Aikman, S. Save the Children and CfBT Education Trust, Seminar entitled 'Language and Education, the Missing Link', Presentation on Language Rights and Language Contexts. 26.11.09, St. Anne's College, Oxford.

Nitya Rao, 'Migration, Domestic Work and the Value of Labour' paper presented at a conference on Waged domestic work and the making of the modern world at the University of Warwick, May 9-11, 2008

Nitya Rao, 'Questioning Macaulay's children: migration, mobility and the assertion of masculinities in rural Bangladesh' paper presented at a workshop on learning, livelihoods and social mobility: Anthropological perspectives on formal and informal education, at Brunel University, May 13-14, 2009.

Nitya Rao, 'Migration choices and educational outcomes: Evidence from India and Bangladesh' paper presented the South Asia Human Development Seminar at the World Bank, Washington D.C on Tuesday June 2nd 2009.

Kebede, B. Esposito, L. and Maddox, B. '*Literacy Practices and Schooling: A Case Study from Mozambique*'. presented at the UEA conference on Literacy Inequalities, 2nd September 2009.

Maddox, B. '*Literacy Inequalities: Who Cares?*' Presented at the UNESCO Education Seminar, Paris, 15th July. 2009.

Maddox, B '*New Literacies, New Technologies and M-Learning: Building on the Literacy Practices of Bangladeshi Fishing Communities*'. Paper prepared for the Workshop on 'Literacy in Fishing Communities', at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, 26th September 2008.

Magyar, A 2009 'Plagiarism prevention: the dangers of separating management from pedagogy'; keynote given at the Institutional Policies and Procedures for Managing Student Plagiarism Conference; Oxford Brookes; Oxford

Magyar, A (2009) 'How can we use our own words and at the same time use the terminology of the discipline?': a qualitative study of international postgraduate student understandings of plagiarism Paper given at the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing Conference; Coventry University

Lillis, T., Magyar, A. and Robinson-Pant, A. (2009) 'Putting academic literacies to use: an international journal's mentoring programme for professional academic writers' (European Association for Teaching Academic Writing Conference, July 2009)

Lillis, T., Magyar, A. and Robinson-Pant, A. (2009) 'Challenging academic literacy practices? Reflections on an international journal's attempts to address inequalities in academic publishing' (Literacy Inequalities Conference, September 2009).

Magyar, A., Robinson-Pant, A. and R. Wahid (2009) Invited presentation at Birmingham University ESRC seminar on 'Internationalisation and doctoral supervision: challenges and opportunities'

Robinson-Pant, A. (2008) Invited seminar on 'Changing discourses: literacy and development in Nepal' at the University of Lancaster

5. Publications by the Literacy and Development Group

Basu, K., Maddox, B. and A. Robinson-Pant (2009) *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literacy and Development*, Routledge: London (edited volume)

Special Issue of the *Journal of Development Studies*, July 2008 (Vol 44, No 6)

Forthcoming

Special issue of *Compare* on Migration, Education and Socio-Economic Mobility, 40:2, 2010, based on a selection of papers from the conference organised in November 2007, including by Nitya Rao and Bryan Maddox.

Cox, S., Dyer, C., Robinson-Pant, A. and M. Schweisfurth, Eds. (2010), *Children as Decision Makers in Education*, London: Continuum, including chapters by:

Aikman, S. 'Grasping rare moments for change: children's participation in conflict contexts'

Cox, S. and Robinson-Pant, A. 'Children as researchers: a question of risk?'

6. Publications by members of the Literacy and Development Group 2008-9

Aikman, S. (2008) edited with Elaine Unterhalter and Tania Boler *HIV and AIDS and Gender: Challenges for Education* (UNESCO), Oxfam: Oxford. (Introduction and conclusion)

Aikman, S. 2009 'The contradictory Languages of Fishing and Gold Panning in the Peruvian Amazon' *Maritime Studies*, Special Issue on Literacy and Fishing. Vol 8 2) pp. 50-71.

Basu, K., Maddox, B. and A. Robinson-Pant (2009) 'Interdisciplinary approaches to literacy and development: a review of the field', Introduction to Special Issue of *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 6 July 769-778.

Basu, K., Maddox, B. and A. Robinson-Pant (2009, eds) *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literacy and Development*, Routledge: London

Basu, K, Maddox, B. and Robinson-Pant, A. (2009) 'A review of the field' In Basu, K, Maddox, B. and Robinson-Pant, A. (Eds.) *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literacy and Development*. Routledge, London.

Chitrakar, R. and Maddox, B (2008) 'A Community Literacy Project in Nepal' in Hornberger, N. (ed), *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Education*, Springer, Heidelberg.

- Cox, S. and A. Robinson-Pant (2008) 'Power, participation and decision making in the primary classroom: children as action researchers', *Educational Action Research*, 16: 4, December
- Maddox, B. (2008) 'What good is literacy? Insights and implications of the capabilities approach', *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 9(2): 185-206.
- Maddox, B., Allison, E.H, and Daw, T.M. (2009) 'Literacies, Education and Development in Fishing-dependent Communities. Special Issue Editorial Paper. *Maritime Studies* (MAST). Volume 8, No 2. pp 5-8.
- Maddox, B. and Overá, R. (2009) 'New technologies, new demands and new literacies: The Changing Literacy Practices of Fishing Communities in Bangladesh and Ghana' *Maritime Studies* (MAST). Volume 8, No 2. pp 10-35.
- Maddox, B. (2009) '*Models and Mechanisms: Multi-disciplinary Perspectives on Literacy and Development*'. In Basu, K, Maddox, B. and Robinson-Pant, A. (Eds.) (2009) *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literacy and Development*. Routledge, London. pp 179-196.
- Maddox, B. (2009) '*New Literacies, New Demands and New Technologies: The Changing Literacy Practices of Bangladeshi Fishing Communities*'. School of International Development Working Paper No: 12. ISSN 1756-7904.
- Rao, N. (2009) 'Gender differences in migration opportunities, educational choices and wellbeing outcomes'. Research Report, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation & Poverty, University of Sussex.
- Robinson-Pant, A. (2008) 'Why literacy matters": exploring a policy perspective on literacy, identity and social change', *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 6 July
- Robinson-Pant, A. (2008) 'Women, Literacy and Development', in Hornberger, N. (ed), *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Education*, Vol. 2 Literacy (2nd. Edition), Springer, Heidelberg ISBN-13: 978-0-387-32875-1
- Robinson-Pant, A. (2009) 'Changing discourses: literacy and development in Nepal', *International Journal of Educational Development*
- Robinson-Pant, A. (2009) 'Changing Academies: exploring international PhD students' perspectives on 'host' and 'home' universities', *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp 417 - 429
- Unterhalter, E., Boler, T and S. Aikman 2008 'Essentialism, equality, and empowerment: concepts of gender and schooling in the HIV and AIDS epidemic' in Aikman et al (eds) *HIV and AIDS and Gender: Challenges for Education* (UNESCO), Oxfam: Oxford pp.11-32.