Voices in a Knowledge Conversation:
An exploration of two narrative representations
of Adult Literacy Learners

Sandra Varey

March 2013

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Educational Research

Lancaster University, UK

DECLARATION

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree of diploma

Signature -

S Varey   28/03/13

Acknowledgements

Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Abstract

As a result of policy changes in adult literacy education in England in recent years, political and public narratives about adult literacy learners have become dominated by the notion of skills deficit, demonstrating a disregard for adult learners' lives and life experiences beyond employment and skills. At the same time, research in the field of adult literacy education continues to highlight the importance and complexities of adult learners' lives and literacy practices. Informed by these ongoing debates in adult literacy, this doctoral research focuses on two different narrative representations of adult literacy learners: their biographical narratives, constructed from life history interview data; and their Skills for Life narrative, in the form of learners' individual learning plan (ILP) paperwork. Using these two different narratives as sources of evidence, the study explores the identities constructed by and for the adults, along with the meanings assigned to literacy learning within each.

Within each of the two narrative representations, participants are found to engage in an important epistemological conversation regarding knowledge, a conversation with two specific sides: objectified knowledge and local, embodied modes of knowing (Smith, 2005). This knowledge conversation influences participants' perceptions of and membership within different discourse communities (Swales, 1990) throughout their lives. A focus on the use of the ILP within the Skills for Life discourse community suggests that increasing textualisation can both support and reinforce the objectified knowledge side of the conversation, while providing participants with opportunities to challenge this by emphasising the importance of local, embodied ways of knowing. This study combines a number of methodologies to develop an original approach to life history research, with an emphasis on participant voice. Adding to the growing body of research around textualisation, paperwork and audit culture,

the thesis openly acknowledges issues around carrying out research in a low-trust environment, thereby contributing to this, often overlooked, aspect of research.

Chapter 1: Beginning with a 'sociology for people' (Smith, 2005)

1.1   Introduction and overview of the thesis

In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed upon adult literacy education in England, and raising the levels of ability has become and remains high on government political agendas. The introduction of the Skills for Life Strategy in 2001 signalled many changes for the teaching and learning of adult literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) as the policy brought with it new curricula frameworks, funding specifications, accreditation for learners and professional qualifications for tutors. Since the policy's introduction, there has been a marked increase in funding for this sector with, for example, £5 billion spent 'on basic skills courses between 2001 and 2007' (House of Commons, 2009, p.3) and a further budget of £3.9 billion for 2007-2010 (NAO, 2008).

As government funding has increased, so too has the emphasis on accreditation-related targets and all available literacy provision is now linked to nationally recognised qualifications. Government plans 'to improve the functional literacy and numeracy skills of one million adults' included 'targets for 390,000 numeracy and 597,000 literacy achievements' by 2011 (DIUS, 2008, p.1). The policy's long-term goal is that '95% of adults are to achieve basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy' by 2020 (Leitch, 2006, p.142), with functional defined as Entry Level 3 for numeracy and Level 1 for literacy. To date, the policy has been successful in achieving its targets:

Beginning in 2001, the Department for Education and Skills was committed to a Public Service Agreement that called for 750,000 adults to achieve a first SfL qualification by 2004, 1.5 million adults to do so by 2007, and 2.25 million to do so by 2010 ... In 2004, the Government achieved the first objective of its Skills for Life targets: between 2001 and 2004, 750,000 adults attained a first SfL qualification at Entry Level 3, Level 1 or Level 2. Three years later, the next stage had also been successfully reached: more than 1.5 million adults had achieved a first SfL qualification. One year later, Skills for Life achieved its 2010 targets - two years early.

(NRDC, 2011, p.25)

As this thesis will illustrate, however, the Skills for Life Strategy has been the cause of much controversy. Along with an increasing focus on qualifications, changes in Adult Literacy provision in recent years show the policy to be adopting an increasingly 'enterprise' oriented approach in which literacy education for adults is 'primarily concerned with developing people to be good and efficient workers' (Trowler, 2003, p.116). As Biesta, Field, Hodkinson, Macleod and Goodson (2011) put it, lifelong learning is 'too easily reduced to a narrowly economic conception' (p.4). As a result of economic recession, for example, a priority of the Coalition Government's programme of policies has been to 'rebuild the economy' and address the fiscal deficit (Cabinet Office, 2010) and this, in turn, has informed the Government's plans to reform the further education and skills sector (see, for example, BIS, 2010a). Against a backdrop of recession, deficit and high unemployment, this chapter illustrates how the Skills for Life Strategy's commitments have changed, with a refocusing on young, unemployed adults. This research has therefore been developed in response to concerns around the direction that Adult Literacy policy is taking, with its narrowed focus on

skills and employment, and addresses the biographies of individual learners - an aspect currently absent in the Skills for Life Strategy - and the roles that literacy plays within them. Informed by Dorothy Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people', the project explores two different representations of adult literacy learners: the adults' biographical narratives, obtained through life history interviews; and their Skills for Life narratives, based on the paperwork held about them in their individual learning plans (ILPs).

1.2   Personal stance and experience

Before beginning my postgraduate studies at Lancaster University in 2007, I was employed as a Skills for Life tutor in a college of further education in Cumbria. In this role, I specialised in Adult Literacy and worked with many adult learners, delivering a range of provision types in a variety of settings. This included working with employees in the workplace, on lone-parent programmes in the community, and college-based literacy workshops.

While working at the college, I completed a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (Post-Compulsory) which entailed an element of action research. It was through this that I developed an interest in research and, in particular, the links between research, policy and practice in adult literacy. In this time, I worked alongside colleagues who, unlike me, had experience of working in the sector prior to the introduction of the Skills for Life Strategy in 2001. It was as a result of discussions with my colleagues that I became aware of the many changes experienced in the sector as a result of such high-profile policy reform. My interest

in the Skills for Life Strategy and of the different representations of adult learners is therefore rooted in my own experiences as an adult literacy practitioner.

More broadly, my interest in adult literacy can be traced back to my experiences of working in retail, before studying for my first degree. Among the many roles I had were department supervisor and colleague trainer and these raised my awareness of the importance of literacy in adults' lives: their relationships with literacy, how they feel about it, the difficulties experienced, and the assumptions other people made about them as a result of this. The following pages introduce Dorothy Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' as a key starting point of this doctoral research. Life history is an important focus of the research and, importantly, my own life history has informed my professional interest in the field of literacy studies and my stance as a researcher.

1.3   Introducing 'a sociology for people' (Smith, 2005)

Dorothy Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' is a fundamental starting point of this research and represents 'a *paradigm shift* (Kuhn, 1970)' that requires 'a different way of conceiving the social and imagining inquiry' (Smith, 2005, p.2, italics in original). Although originally referred to as 'women's standpoint theory', Smith's (2005) sociology 'does not identify a position or a category of position, gender, class, or race within society' (p.10). Gender is not an intended starting point of this study's focus and Smith's (2005) sociology is therefore referred to throughout this thesis as a 'sociology for people' and 'a standpoint of people'. In her sociology, Smith (2005) distinguishes between the ruling relations and the standpoint of people, a distinction which forms the starting point of this study. The ruling relations are

defined as the 'extraordinary yet ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across space and time and organize our everyday lives – the corporations, government bureaucracies, academic and professional discourses, mass media, and the complex of relations that interconnect them' (p.10). Standpoint, however, 'creates a point of entry into discovering the social that does not subordinate the knowing subject to objectified forms of knowledge of society or political economy' (Smith, 2005, p.10). This study focuses on two narrative representations of adult literacy learners, representations which are informed by Smith's (2005) concepts of 'the ruling relations' and 'the standpoint of people'. The first narrative representation is that of the Skills for Life Strategy as contained in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) paperwork held by providing institutions about their adult literacy learners. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the adult literacy ILP is a product of an educational policy and is therefore rooted within the ruling relations (Smith, 2005). The second narrative representation is in the form of adult learners' biographical narratives, constructed from life history interview data, and therefore begins from the 'standpoint of people' (Smith, 2005).

Smith (2005) developed her sociology as a result of her unease at 'the deep opposition between the mainstream sociology I had learned as a graduate student ... and what I had discovered in the women's movement' (p.1). In addition, Smith's (2005) own experience was that 'The two subjectivities, home and university, could not be blended' (p.11). As a single parent teaching sociology in a university, Smith (2005) recalls her 'contradictory modes of working existence' at that time (p.11):

> ... on the one hand was the work of the home and of being a mother; on the other,
>
> the work of the academy, preparing for classes, teaching, faculty meetings,

writing papers, and so on. I could not see my work at home in relation to the sociology I taught, in part, of course, because that sociology had almost nothing to say about it.

<div align="right">(Smith, 2005, p.11)</div>

This doctoral research has been developed in response to a similar unease: that the conceptualisations of literacy inherent within adult literacy policy are out-of-step with adult literacy learners' daily lives and the literacy practices found within these. Different conceptualisations result in different representations of literacy learners and, in choosing to focus on these two narrative representations of adult literacy learners, it is important to introduce the different conceptualisations of literacy which inform them.

1.4   Conceptualising literacies

In *Why Literacy Matters*, St. Clair (2010) outlines 'Three ways to look at literacy' (p.13). The first conceptualisation is the 'functional view' which, as St. Clair (2010) explains, 'In very simple terms ... is being able to read and write well enough to be able to function in everyday life' (p.14). However, 'these deliberately open and pragmatic ways of looking at literacy do not address two important questions' (St. Clair, 2010, p.15):

One is how we know whether people are functionally literate. If we followed the philosophical base of the definition the only way would be to ask each person whether they felt they could use texts in a functional way. This is clearly not very efficient, and also raises the question of whether people might see themselves as

functionally literate by definition because they adjust what they *do* to match what

they *can do* ... The second question is what functions people should be literate

for. Is there a key set of functions common to most people in any given society,

or must literacy usage remain completely eclectic and individual?

<div align="right">(St. Clair, 2010, p.p.15-16, italics in original)</div>

This approach often leads to claims that functional literacy skills can improve one's quality of life (see, for example, Moser, 1999). Such claims have received criticism with Trowler (2003), for example, arguing that new vocationalism 'has not enhanced social mobility for individuals and groups undertaking [training]; rather it has tended to reproduce social inequalities' (p.89). Similarly, Lankshear (1993) states that 'functional literacy work resembles the act of rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic*' (p.107), illustrating the belief that literacy education alone cannot change society. Although, therefore, 'For many people' the functional perspective is 'one of the most intuitively appealing approaches to literacy', its 'openness' has 'proven to be [its] central vulnerability' and 'there has been a tendency to fill the gap with work-orientated measures and teaching approaches' (St. Clair, 2010, p.p. 14-16). The focus on adult literacy education in terms of the economy and employment is becoming increasingly dominant within policy discourse and is addressed later in this chapter. Importantly, however, as Biesta et al (2011) put it, 'the focus of the discourse on lifelong learning appears to have shifted from 'learning to be' to 'learning to be productive and employable' (p.5).

The second long-standing theorisation of literacy considers it to be 'a set of cognitive processes' (St. Clair, 2010, p.18):

Psychology has a long-standing fascination with the mental operations of reading – if we are trying to understand literacy, the argument goes, then we must understand more about the cognitive apparatus that allows us to turn marks on a page into meaningful language.

(St. Clair, 2010, p.18)

While the functional perspective is concerned with people's ability 'to read and write well enough to be able to function in everyday life' (St. Clair, 2010, p.14), the cognitive approach therefore results in a focus on 'the mental operations' involved in literacy (p.24). Each of these approaches is useful in exploring and understanding literacy. St. Clair (2010) emphasises, for example, the importance of the work of psychologists working from the cognitive standpoint, explaining how this work:

... has attracted many brilliant and imaginative researchers over the years, and thanks to their efforts we have some sort of framework for understanding the processes underlying literacy.

(St. Clair, 2010, p.p.18-19)

In different ways, however, the functional and cognitive perspectives each focus on literacy in relation to the *individual*. Although it may be 'quite appealing and easy to understand' to think of literacy as 'a single set of skills that you can be better or worse at putting into practice' (St. Clair, 2010, p.26), these approaches result in a focus on the individual, the skills that s/he does or does not have, and on 'attributing blame' (Barton and Hamilton, 2012, p.20). Consequently, the functional and cognitive approaches are often referred to as either the 'autonomous' or the 'deficit' view of literacy (Street, 1984). Both the functional and

cognitive perspectives therefore have limitations and, as Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) explain, 'Reading and writing always swim in a far richer sea than traditional approaches to literacy allow for' (p.4).

By contrast, the third conceptualisation of literacy, the social practices perspective, is concerned with 'the enormous diversity of social practices around text production and consumption', referring to literacies rather than literacy (St. Clair, 2010, p.26). This approach was borne out of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement which began in the 1980s as part of 'a larger "social turn" away from a focus on individuals and their "private" minds and towards interaction and social practice' (Gee, 1999, p.1). This approach towards literacy is 'based on the view that reading and writing only make sense when studied in the context of social and cultural (and we can add historical, political, and economic) practices of which they are but a part' (Gee, 1999, p.1). Maclachlan and Tett (2006) explain that the NLS emerged in the wake of 'Street's seminal writing two decades ago' and 'have consistently and insistently challenged what Street termed the autonomous model of adult literacies' (p.195). The autonomous model:

> posits literacy as a set of normative, unproblematic technical skills that are
> neutral, and that are detached from the social contexts in which they are used. It
> conceives literacies' learning therefore as the structured acquisition of
> hierarchical skills; as an educational ladder which adults should climb. It also
> defines adult learners by the perceived limits of their literacies abilities in relation
> to these skills, and not by their existing, diverse literacies capabilities.
>
>   (Maclachlan and Tett, 2006, p.195-196)

The social practices view of literacy instead 'starts from people's uses of literacy, not from their formal learning of literacy' (Barton, 1994, p.p.33-34). As Barton and Hamilton (2012) explain, central to the social practices approach to literacy is the view that 'Literacy does not just reside in people's heads as a set of skills to be learned, and it does not just reside on paper, captured as texts to be analysed. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people' (p.3). This view of literacy considers it in its plural form, *literacies*, to reflect how dynamic and fluid it is considered to be.

The contrasting theories of literacy outlined here continue to be a source of much debate within the field of literacy studies. In their criticism of the functional model of literacy, Ozanne, Adkins and Sandlin (2005) describe the approach as assuming that 'literacy is a set of skills transferable from one setting to another, regardless of socio-cultural context' (p.253). As St. Clair (2010) explains, the social practices approach to literacy emphasises 'the social aspects of textual production and use' (p.26):

> A key argument of social practices perspectives is that it simply does not make sense to view literacy separately from the communicative context in which it is used ... Analysts within the new literacy studies would generally accept the idea that textual technology develops in response to social, economic and political demands.
>
> (St. Clair, 2010, p.26)

The social practices model is fundamental to this research. Just as Smith's (2005) sociology of people starts from 'the actualities of people's everyday lives and experience' (p.10), the social practices view of literacy 'starts from people's uses of literacy, not from their formal

learning of literacy' (Barton, 1994, p.p.33-34). Unlike traditional sociology, Smith's (2005) conceptualisation of 'standpoint in people's everyday lives' creates 'a subject position within its discourse, which anyone can occupy' (p.10). Similarly, an important premise of the social practices perspective is that 'the various forms of literacy have equal worth' (St. Clair, 2010, p.26):

> They do not vary in their sophistication or communicative ability, but in their appropriateness to a given context. So the forms of literacy valued in schools are valued because that is what school literacy usually looks like, rather than because they are fundamentally better ... Other forms of literacy may not be so explicit, perhaps because it represents communication between two people who eat together every night and who have common understandings. In this case, sticking a note on the fridge saying 'Get toms and stuff' might be enough ... Within the multiliteracies approach both the explicit school-based literacy and the brief note are important and interesting manifestations of literacy use.
>
> (St. Clair, 2010, p.27)

Assigning equal worth to different literacies is not a feature of the autonomous perspective and, importantly, it is the autonomous approach that informs public and political narratives of literacy in England. Within these dominant narratives, literacy is instead categorised, with some literacies valued more than others. Street's (1993) distinction between '*dominant* literacies' and '*vernacular* literacies' is an important one, with dominant literacies originating 'from the dominant institutions of society' and vernacular literacies having 'their roots in everyday life' (Barton, 1994, p.39, italics in original). In *Local Literacies*, Barton and Hamilton (2012) discuss dominant and vernacular literacy practices:

Socially powerful institutions, such as education, tend to support dominant literacy practices. These dominant practices can be seen as part of whole discourse formations, institutionalised configurations of power and knowledge which are embodied in social relationships. Other vernacular literacies which exist in people's everyday lives are less visible and less supported. This means that literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies become more dominant, visible and influential than others.

(Barton and Hamilton, 2012, p.p.10-11)

The Skills for Life strategy is informed by functional and cognitive approaches to literacy – approaches which do not distinguish between dominant and vernacular literacies. Unlike the English strategy, however, some countries' policies are informed by the social practices approach, enabling them to make the important distinction between dominant and vernacular literacies. 'An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum for Scotland' (Scottish Executive, 2005), for example, states that:

Rather than seeing literacy and numeracy as the decontextualised, mechanical manipulation of letters, words and figures [the social practices] view shows that literacy and numeracy are located within social, emotional and linguistic contexts. Many literacy and numeracy events in life are regular, repeated activities, such as paying bills, sending greetings cards or reading bed-time stories and some events are linked into routine sequences that are part of the formal procedures and expectations of social institutions such as workplaces, schools and welfare agencies.

Similarly, as a result of the White Paper, 'Learning for Life' (Department of Education and Science, 2000), the Irish government significantly developed its National Adult Literacy Programme which, like Scotland's, is rooted in the social practices approach to literacy:

> ... while literacy is clearly linked to economic development and employment, is must not be limited to issues of economics. Literacy is deeply connected with the rights of individuals and communities: it is about their right to have a voice in society; to continue and extend their education; to read and to be read.
>
> (Derbyshire, O'Riordan and Phillips, 2005, p.7)

Like Scotland, Ireland's 'Learning for Life' policy includes 'a philosophy of literacy as broader than just workforce development' which, Bailey (2005) argues, distinguishes it from 'market-driven' policies in the UK (p.198). The following pages illustrate key developments in the Skills for Life strategy in England.

1.5   Before Skills for Life: a brief history of adult literacy education in England

In 2011, the Skills for Life Strategy marked its tenth year since implementation. Pivotal events in the history of adult literacy education in England provide a backdrop for understanding some of the issues that have emerged as a result of the Skills for Life Strategy. Historically, adult literacy has not been considered an important issue within developed countries, with Hamilton and Hillier (2006) explaining that 'Since 1948, UNESCO had

promoted adult literacy in developing countries without formal schooling systems whilst Western European countries returned statistics recording a zero for illiteracy' (p.4). The government's position regarding adult literacy in England had, however, changed significantly by the 1970s when 'Advocacy by individual members of government successfully exploited an interest in adult education for disadvantaged adults, opened up by the publication of the Russell Report in 1973' (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006, p.8). This relatively recent political shift regarding adult literacy education and its newly found position of importance is crucial in understanding the current context.

Indeed, Jones and Marriott (1995) explore 'why effective action' regarding adults' literacy and numeracy skills in England was introduced as late as the 1970s when 'alarming information on basic educational deficits among adults had been appearing since the Second World War' (p.337). In considering reasons for the slow public response to addressing the 'problem' (Jones and Marriott, 1995, p.337), it is also important to consider 'the verve with which' Adult Basic Education was eventually 'taken up in the mid-1970s' (Jones and Marriott, 1995, p.350):

> The eventual widespread acceptance of the challenge has to be understood in the somewhat complicated context of the more 'radical' mood which began to affect adult education from the late 1960s. This movement of opinion reflected existing tendencies in educational affairs, and particularly the irruption of sociological critique into policy making; in adult education it helped enthrone such ideas as 'need', 'disadvantage' and 'community'.
>
> (Jones and Marriott, 1995, p.352)

While highlighting how public attitude changed towards the subjects of literacy and illiteracy, Jones and Marriot (1995) do not address the role that other events may have had in the emergence of adult literacy as a key component of the political agenda. In considering the changes that took place in the second half of the twentieth century regarding adult literacy education, it is necessary to also consider the economic changes of that time, namely the move away from goods production to the emergence of a knowledge-based economy. Indeed, as Brandt (2009) explains, the speed at which the world and workplace changed throughout the twentieth century placed ever-changing demands on workers' knowledge and literacies, leaving them 'running to stay abreast of the moving train of change' (p.x).

Changes in the economy over the past few decades have inevitably led to different expectations and requirements of people working in many employment sectors. The term 'learning a living' was coined by McLuhan (1964) in his observation of a move from an industrialised world to one dominated by information technologies. Several decades later, Neef (1999) explains that although, in the past, 'the vast majority of employees were concentrated on the production' of goods, our economy is becoming increasingly dependent 'upon knowledge and skills' (p.6). The changes in both policy and attitudes surrounding adult literacy must therefore be considered against the backdrop of such economic changes. These developments 'reinforce the view that the establishment of a learning society is vital to meet the growing diversity of economic and social imperatives' (Leader, 2003, p.1):

As the pace of socio-economic change and technological innovation gathers speed, individuals will need to update their skills to keep abreast of global challenges. Responsiveness to these changes on a global scale is inherently linked to inclusion of the

deskilled and unemployed, the restructuring of employment patterns and adaptability of employees to different working environments.

<div align="right">(Leader, 2003, p.369)</div>

Jones and Marriott (1995) allude to an early link between employment, employer productivity and literacy when they explain how 'In the autumn of 1943 came the announcement that in the interests 'of the Army and the Nation' basic education centres were to be established to tackle illiteracy' in the Armed Forces (p.338). Indeed one military Commander is quoted as saying '"a good letter home was a particular target"' (Jones and Marriott, 1995, p.338), suggesting that literacy skills were thought to increase morale and, in turn, productivity. As economic changes have taken place in recent years, the level of skills possessed by those within society appears to have become synonymous with the economic prosperity of that society. As a result, post-compulsory education in general is increasingly viewed by government 'in terms of its relevance for the economy' (Trowler, 2003, p.91).

Although the profile of adult literacy may have been raised to promote equality for disadvantaged adults, there has been much concern in recent years about the direction that adult literacy education is taking, and that the concern highlighted by Trowler (2003) may also apply to literacy education.

Brandt (2009) discusses 'The growing entanglement of literacy with economic productivity' and how this 'shapes the rationales for acquiring literacy, how it is understood, valued and evaluated' (p.xii). The increasing emphasis on accreditation in adult literacy education can be understood in relation to the emergence of a learning society in which adults are under pressure to demonstrate up-to-date skills and possess current qualifications. Edwards and

Usher (2008) explore the effects that globalisation is having on pedagogy and how education is responding to the demands of a learning society. One chapter, for example, is entitled *'Working and (l)earning'*, illustrating how 'Learning and earning have now become equated in many discourses, such that to be able to earn requires the capacity, opportunity and necessity to learn' (Edwards and Usher, 2008, p.p.78-79).

This historical overview illustrates how, in the years preceding the Skills for Life Strategy, adult literacy education gained increasing attention and, although initially rooted in both 'liberal and radical' ideological approaches (Hamilton and Hiller, 2006, p.115), these are now in tension with the discourse of employment and skills. Indeed, following a close reading of 15 policy texts, Hodgson, Spours and Steer's (2008) state that, 'In English policy documents, it is clear that a direct link is being made between skills, employment and social inclusion' and that 'There is an assumption that the first leads on to the second and on to the third' (p.117). Importantly, however

> it appears that the second aim of social inclusion is not only dependent upon, but also subordinate to the first aim of developing skills for economic competitiveness. Moreover, some of the policy-actors we interviewed saw the two in tension with one another.
>
> (Hodgson, Spours and Steer, 2008, p.117)

It has been highlighted earlier in the chapter that, while adult literacy policy in England is informed by functional and cognitive conceptualisations of literacy, this is not the case in other countries. Similarly, an alternative to the 'prevailing conceptualisation' of literacy,

employment and skills is offered in the form of a 'critical literacy approach to policy and practice' (Hamilton and Pitt, 2011a):

This approach surfaces issues of power and inequality in both the process and outcomes of literacy education: Paulo Freire, as philosopher but also state educator, has been an inspirational figure (Freire, 1995). National and international initiatives have built on his approach ... [and] aim to bridge community-generated perspectives with national state policy.

(Hamilton and Pitt, 2011a, p.597)

There are a number of initiatives which have developed a critical literacy approach. Hanemann (2005), for example, describes how the 'National Literacy Crusade that took place in Nicaragua from March to August 1980' was informed by this approach. In addition, the approach has been used by the international NGO, Action Aid, to develop Reflect:

Reflect is a diverse and innovative approach to adult learning and social change, used by over 350 organisations in 60 countries ... The Reflect approach links adult learning to empowerment. Having begun life as an approach to adult literacy, Reflect is now a tool for strengthening people's ability to communicate through whatever medium is most relevant to them ... Groups develop their own learning materials by constructing maps, calendars, matrices, and diagrams or using drama, story-telling and songs to capture social, economic, cultural and political issues from their own environment.

(Action Aid, 2012)

While critical literacy offers an alternative approach, however, Hamilton and Pitt (2011a) explain that 'finding ways to "scale up" critical literacy initiatives to national level' is challenging, particularly 'when a narrow economic discourse dominates social policy, together with management practices that emphasise closely monitored outcome-related targets' (p.597). It is therefore important to understand the changes that have resulted in this narrow political discourse.

1.6   A decade of developments in the Skills for Life Strategy

The changes in adult literacy policy in recent years must be considered in the context of a 'changing constellation of national and international discourses and governance practices' (Hamilton and Pitt, 2011b, p.352). In the introduction to *Remaking Governance*, Newman (2005) explains that 'Across Western Europe governments are seeking to dismantle the contract between state and citizen that was inscribed in the social democratic welfare state and to build a more 'modern' contract based on responsibility and choice' (p.1):

> Governmental power is both retreating – with state institutions being slimmed down, 'hollowed out', decentred and marketised – and expanding, reaching into more and more of citizens' personal lives: for example, their decisions about work, health and parenting ... [In this book] We highlight ways in which new governance relationships and practices may reshape patterns of identity and belonging.
>
> (Newman, 2005, p.p.1-2)

The developments – and the tensions – in the Skills for Life Strategy over the past decade must therefore be understood in the context of 'modernisation', 'globalisation' and 'privatisation' which, as Newman (2005) points out 'are each terms that signal profound shifts in the process of governance' (p.1). Hamilton and Pitt (2011b) discuss how 'The New Labour government in the United Kingdom (1997-2010) developed a technocratic style of governance, characterized by closely managed and monitored systemic changes and the imposition of high-stakes, outcome-related targets (Seldon, 2007)' (p.352):

> The *Skills for Life* strategy was pursued within these practices ... Tony Blair's New Labour vision ... [incorporated] a meritocratic view of the "good society", where people were to be assured opportunities to advance within employment but then had to rely on their own efforts and responsibilities as citizens to become included.
>
> (Hamilton and Pitt, 2011b, p.352)

To illustrate the key developments in adult literacy policy in the past decade, the following pages refer to four key policy documents: the Moser Report (Moser, 1999) which led to the introduction of the Skills for Life Strategy in 2001; the Leitch Report (Leitch, 2006), published in December 2006 to review the policy to date and set further targets; 'Skills for Sustainable Growth' (BIS, 2010a), outlining the plans of the new Coalition Government for reform in the skills sector; and 'New Challenges, New Chances' (BIS, 2011a), published in December 2011 and building on 'Skills for Sustainable Growth'. Drawing on these four texts, the following pages illustrate how 'a pervasive set of discourses, deficit and functional, now directly links people with 'low literacy skills' with national prosperity in a simple cause and effect relationship' (Hamilton and Pitt, 2011a, p.603).

1.6.1 *A Fresh Start: Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy for Adults* (Moser, 1999)

The 1997 Labour Party manifesto stated: 'We will make education our number one priority' (Labour Party, 1997). One of the key educational issues that Labour was to address was that of adult literacy and numeracy standards. The new Labour government commissioned the Moser Group to investigate the issue of adult literacy and numeracy nationwide and it responded with a report, *A Fresh Start* (Moser, 1999), which outlined the level of need nationally and recommended that a national strategy be introduced to address this. The report featured some alarming statistics including that 'one adult in five in this country is not functionally literate' and warned that 'Limited skills are also a brake on the economy' (Moser, 1999, p.2). The report also featured the following table of comparison:

Percentage of adults with low literacy and low numeracy (identical questions in all countries)		
	Literacy	Numeracy
Germany	12%	7%
Canada	17%	17%
Britain	23%	23%
		(Moser, 1999, p.2)

Table 1.1

As a result the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) was set up in 2001 within the Department for Education and Skills to oversee and implement the new Skills for Life *Strategy*. The Moser Report was also instrumental in establishing a research programme to

support the Skills for Life Strategy, the National Research and Development Centre (NRDC), and a new system of inspection, the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), which began inspections in January 2002. It was therefore evident from the outset that the policy was informed by economic factors. *A Fresh Start* (Moser, 1999), however, also emphasised the importance of allowing individuals the opportunity to improve their skills and therefore enhance their quality of life, stating that 'for many people limited basic skills mean serious disadvantages – at work (in fact many are unemployed), and in limiting much of what a full life can offer (p.2). In this respect, the policy appeared to be concerned with the impact of literacy and numeracy skills on individuals' lives both within and beyond the workplace. In the following policy documents, however, it becomes clear that there was to be a move away from the notion of the personal uses for literacy, which was at least touched on by Moser (1999), and towards a far narrower conceptualisation of literacy and the importance of literacy skills.

1.6.2   *Prosperity for All in the Global Economy – World Class Skills* (Leitch, 2006)

The Leitch Report was published in December 2006 and was primarily concerned with the UK's global prosperity, stating that skills such as literacy and numeracy are central to success in terms of the economy and people's employability (Leitch, 2006, p.46). The focus on the skills gap marked a very clear move away from the importance of people being able to fulfil their potential which was at least hinted at by Moser (1999) and further towards the model of functional skills and their role in the economy. The report sets the ambitious target for 2020 that 95% of adults are to be functionally literate, with intermediary targets for 2011 (Leitch, 2006, p.14). *Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills* (DIUS, 2007) was the first major

paper to be published by the newly formed Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) with a dominant discourse of 'customers' and a 'demand-led approach' (p.10). The benefits of improving people's literacy and numeracy skills are stated as being first that employers get a more productive workforce and therefore business, and second that individuals become more able to support their families. The Skills for Life Strategy's target audience is portrayed as one of the country's 'considerable weaknesses' with one half of adults said to 'have difficulty with numbers' and one seventh 'not functionally literate' (Leitch, 2006, p.1). The text contains many negative connotations, defining potential adult literacy and numeracy learners in terms of what they lack and what they are not considered able to do. Interestingly, the report contains chapters such as 'The increasing importance of skills', 'Employer engagement in skills' and 'Employment and skills' yet does not at any point refer directly to the adults concerned, who are instead portrayed only in terms of global, not individual, prosperity. Also significant is that the report places an emphasis on 'young people' and in particular 14-19 year olds (Leitch, 2006, p.16) with older adults defined only as employees.

1.6.3   *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (BIS, 2010a)

In the year in which the majority of this project's fieldwork was being undertaken, a national election took place which saw the formation of a new coalition government. Published in November 2010, the 'Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy Document' (BIS, 2010a) outlines the new Government's plans to reform the further education and skills sector, including Adult Literacy, and the first purpose of this strategy illustrates how skills are placed at the heart of the new Government's plans:

This Government's purpose is to return the economy to sustainable growth, extend social inclusion and social mobility and build the Big Society. Underpinning every aspect of this purpose is the improvement of skills. This document sets out our strategy for improving and using skills to realise our central objective.

(BIS, 2010a, p.5)

It is important to address the social and political context in which this strategy was launched and, indeed, the shift from 'Prosperity for All' (Leitch, 2006) to a focus on 'Sustainable Growth' (BIS, 2010a) belies many economic difficulties. In 2009, the UK officially entered into a recession with a serious impact on unemployment figures for 2010. The Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2010a) illustrates how, for January to March 2010, 'there were 2.51 million unemployed people' (p.1), which it states was 'the highest figure since the three months to December 1994' (p.2). The number of job vacancies was 'down 6,000 over the quarter' and the number of people 'working part-time because they could not find a full-time job' stood at 1.07 million, 'the highest figure since comparable records began in 1992' (ONS, 2010a, p.2). In the year in which this skills strategy was launched, national debt also stood at an all-time high; 'at the end of December 2010 general government debt was £1105.8 billion, equivalent to 76.1 per cent of GDP' (ONS, 2011).

A priority of the Coalition Government's programme of policies is to 'rebuild the economy' and address the deficit (Cabinet Office, 2010), and the 'Skills for Sustainable Growth' document (BIS, 2010a) makes reference to 'the current fiscal climate' (p.5) and 'difficult decisions about the use of public funds' (p.3). The backdrop of recession, deficit and high unemployment sees the strategy being based on 'the Coalition principles of fairness,

responsibility and freedom' (BIS, 2010a, p.6). In relation to 'Fairness', the strategy aims to 'support the adults who lack the basic skills they need to access employment and participate in society, and support the unemployed who are actively seeking work' (p.6). On the theme of 'Responsibility', it is stated that 'Employers and citizens must take greater responsibility for ensuring their own skills need are met' and that all adult learners will be offered 'a Lifelong Learning Account' (BIS, 2010a, p.6). The Government also proposes more 'Freedom': first, for adult learners themselves, as increasing 'competition between training providers' will 'encourage greater diversity of provision'; and, second, for providers, by freeing them 'from excessively bureaucratic control and centrally determined targets' (BIS, 2010a, p.7). In 'Skills for Sustainable Growth' (BIS, 2010a), the link between employment and skills is therefore seen to strengthen in a climate dominated by high unemployment (ONS, 2010a), increasing costs of living (ONS, 2010b), and national economic deficit (ONS, 2011). The Coalition's intention is therefore to 'move to a new system, where we do things differently' (BIS, 2010a, p.5):

> We must abandon a culture of bureaucratic central planning and regulatory control. For too long, the skills system has been micromanaged from the centre, with Government setting targets for the number and type of qualifications that ought to be delivered , and with learners and colleges following funding, rather that colleges responding to the needs of employers and the choices of learners.
>
> (BIS, 2010a, p.5)

While a move away from central regulatory control, which came to characterise the Skills for Life Strategy, is welcomed by many, there has been a 'mixed response from the sector' (Astley, 2010) with some concerns about the 'new vision for skills' (BIS, 2010b). Among

the concerns include 'cuts to the funding of courses which adults can currently access for free', with calls 'for more proposals based on the needs of learners, rather than the economy' (Astley, 2010). Specifically in relation to LLN, concerns include the 'resources and infrastructure' available for informal learning, the focus 'on young people entering employment for the first time' rather than supporting 'learning at all stages of life', and the lack of detail available about the move to a more learner-centred skills system and the introduction of Lifelong Learning accounts (Burgess, Freeman and Wedgbury, 2010).

1.6.4   *New Challenges, New Chances* (BIS, 2011a)

Prior to the publication of 'New Challenges, New Chances' (BIS, 2011a), a consultation process took place, in which the Government invited responses to its further education reform plan. Reflecting the views and concerns of many, NIACE (2011) responded by inviting the Government to set out 'the purposes of further education in building social cohesion and responsibility as well as raising economic productivity', along with 'a commitment to making the sector no less attractive to people throughout their lives than it is to young people completing their initial education and preparing to enter the labour market' (NIACE, 2011, p.1). The feedback from members of RaPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacy) voices a similar concern about the policy's shift 'towards vocationally-oriented literacy education' (RAPAL, 2011, p.2):

> In this [current economic] climate there is a risk that literacy education that is more focused on personal and community development and social justice issues

can be squeezed out. However, we need a much broader vision of the purposes

and contexts for literacy education.

<div align="right">(RaPAL, 2011, p.2)</div>

Building on 'Skills for Sustainable Growth' (BIS, 2010a), 'New Challenges, New Chances' (BIS, 2011a) was published in December 2011, along with a 'Skills Investment Statement 2011-2014' (BIS, 2011b). Citing the recently published 'Skills for Life Survey' (BIS, 2011c), the report states that:

... despite considerable efforts over the last 10 years to improve the basic skills of

adults, our new national survey shows that 24% of adults (8.1 million people)

lack functional numeracy skills and 15% (5.1 million people) lack functional

literacy skills. This is unacceptable.

<div align="right">(BIS, 2011a, p.p.10-11)</div>

Although, in the consultation process, concerns were expressed by many parties – including NIACE and RaPAL – when published in 2011, 'New Challenges, New Chances' (BIS, 2011a) set out the Coalition Government's intention to focus on 'young adults who lack English and Maths skills, and those adults not in employment' (BIS, 2011a, p.13). While the government is different, similarities are therefore evident between this, the alarming statistics contained within the Moser Report (1990) and the overall deficit portrayal of the policy's target audience (see, for example, the Leitch Report, 2006).

These four policy documents illustrate how Adult Literacy policy in England is becoming focused upon younger adults and, in particular, one aspect of their lives: participation in the

workplace. Economic concerns are central to the policy discourse, with literacy skills increasingly referred to in terms of their currency and monitory value, reflecting the conceptualisations of literacy inherent within this particular 'form of ruling' (Smith, 2005). Lankshear (1993) explains that 'Banking education refers to situations in which narrating teachers deposit information into the minds of passive students. It assumes that knowledge is 'a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing', and regards humans as adaptable and manageable beings (Freire, 1972: 46-7)' (Lankshear, 1993, p.99). As the following section illustrates, different conceptualisations of literacy inform representations and subjectivities of adult literacy learners which, in turn, result in the privileging of particular epistemologies.

1.7   A focus on two narrative representations

To recap, this study begins with Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' and focuses on two different narrative representations of twelve adult literacy learners. The first narrative representation is informed by the 'ruling relations' (Smith, 2005) and is that contained within the ILP, a document produced as a result of participants' enrolment on an Adult Literacy course. The second narrative representation begins from the 'standpoint of people' (Smith, 2005) and is that contained within participants' biographical narratives, a text produced as a result of participation within this research project. In the design of the life history interviews, discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4, a 'third space' (Gutiérrez, 2008; Wilson, 2003) is created that is informed by both the researcher and the research participants and which is consequently understood to be rooted in participants' everyday/everynight worlds (Smith, 2005). Life story is considered a powerful way in which to begin a narrative inquiry from the

standpoint of people, thus exploring, through life stories, the way in which people represent their own participation in the everyday / everynight worlds of their lives (Smith, 2005). The biographical narrative begins from the standpoint of the participants involved: as Smith (1999) explains, such an 'Inquiry starts with the knower who is actually located; she is active; she is at work; she is connected up with particular other people in various ways; she thinks, eats, sleeps, laughs, desires, sorrows, sings, curses, loves, just here; she reads here; she watches television' (p.4). Like the ''established sociology'' in which Smith (2005) was trained, the Skills for Life ILP narrative 'begins from a standpoint in a text-mediated discourse or organization' - as illustrated in the previous pages - 'operates to claim a piece of the actual for the ruling relations of which it is part' and 'proceeds from a concept or theory expressing those relations' (Smith, 1999, p.4). The biographical narrative begins from the standpoint of people and positions the research participant as an active knower. It is therefore both important and intentional that this research focuses upon two distinctly different narratives representations of adult literacy learners.

In Chapter 1 of *Institutional Ethnography*, Smith (2005) draws on her own experiences, highlighting 'a contradiction fundamental to our society between, on the one hand, forms of ruling (including discourse) mediated by texts and organized extra- or translocally in objectified modes of the ruling relations and, on the other hand, the traditional particularizations of both locale and relationships that still characterize family households' (p.22). The discussion in previous pages has highlighted how one form of ruling, the Skills for Life Strategy, results in particular representations of adult literacy learners. As a result of its focus on two different narrative representations, issues of identity are at the centre of this study. This study draws on Gee's (2011) concept of identity which, he explains, does not 'mean your core sense of self, who you take yourself "essentially" to be' but, instead, the

'different ways of being in the world at different times and places and for different purposes' (p.3). Importantly, then, participants in this study are likely to be affected by the particular point in UK history in which they find themselves living, and the economic and social conditions they experience. Field (2011) stresses the importance of generational analysis in biographical research and, discussing cohort-based biographical research, explains:

> The notion of generation is double-edged. It refers, on the one hand, to family positions and relationships and thus marks off phases of the life course in terms of being a child, parent, or grandparent. Generation can also be understood as membership of a cohort, denoting an age-based form of social identification that is structured around people's shared experiences and understandings and the specific social and political events that have occurred throughout their life course. In both cases, learning plays an important role. Family contexts form an intimate and immediate environment for informal learning, which then has enormous spill-over effects into education and training throughout life. Equally, members of every age cohort are influenced by the education and training that they receive, and the context in which they receive it; and they in turn bring shared generational dispositions to bear upon their understandings of what learning is and can be in their lives.
>
> (Field, 2011, p.2)

As will be outlined in the following pages, an important aspect of this study is to explore the meanings assigned to literacy learning within each of the narrative representations.

The 'different times', 'places' and 'purposes' discussed by Gee (2011) regarding identity can also be understood in relation to Smith's (2005) standpoint of people and ruling relations, which result in different narrative representations of people. As Gee (2011) explains, narratives do not just 'say things' about people, but allow them to 'do things and be things' (p.2):

> Many people think language exists so that we can "say things" in the sense of communicating information. However, language serves a great many functions in our lives. Giving and getting information is by no means the only one. Language does, of course, allow us to inform each other. But it also allows us to do things and to be things, as well. In fact, saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.2)

1.8 Different narratives, different knowledge

Along with issues of identity, the two different narrative representations of focus in this research are understood as representing and producing different knowledge, informing the extent to which the narrative might be privileged. The Skills for Life narrative, represented in the form of the ILP document, is informed by the ruling relations and draws on dominant literacy practices. The biographical narrative, constructed through a number of life history interviews, and is instead understood as being constructed from the standpoint of the people involved, drawing on vernacular literacy practices. As a result of these differences, the two narratives are concerned with very different discourses about knowledge and ways of

knowing. In 'Privileged Literacies', Hamilton (2001) discusses 'how institutions produce and privilege certain kinds of knowing – and how, in this process, they devalue or re-define the local and the vernacular for their own purposes' (p.178). A starting point of this study is that the Skills for Life narrative produces and privileges institutional kinds of knowing and, in the process, devalues vernacular knowledge. As previously discussed, for example, the autonomous model of literacy which informs the Skills for Life Strategy assumes that 'people with literacy problems have a deficit that needs to be rectified' (Crowther, Hamilton and Tett, 2001, p.33) and results in a prescriptive approach towards what counts , and therefore what does not count, as literacy. As Kalman (1997) explains, this 'hegemonic image of literacy' excludes many literacy practices and, in doing so, excludes 'the people who use those practices' (p.21). From this perspective, writing is limited 'to a few elitist practices' with everything else disqualified 'as "not literacy"' (Kalman, 1997, p.52).

From the social practices perspective which informs the construction of the biographical narrative, however, the notion of literacy deficit is out-of-step with contemporary life. In the introduction to *Literacy and Learning*, Brandt (2009) discusses how the 'growing entanglement of literacy with economic productivity ... puts difficult pressure on teachers, families, communities, and most of all, learners' (p.xii):

> While it is common to lament the failure of some young people and adults to grasp "the basics" of reading and writing, we often forget that what is basic to one generation often proves inadequate for the next.
>
> (Brandt, 2009, p.xi)

The social practices approach to literacy provides an alternative standpoint to the notions of 'deficit' and 'lack' that accompany functional and cognitive perspectives. As Brandt (2009) suggests, for example, when adults' literacy skills are considered in relation to the 'economic competition and technological change' being experienced and negotiated, the conclusion must be that people have a 'surplus' as opposed to 'a deficit of skills', as 'sets of new literacy practices pile up on top of old ones and nothing ever quite goes away' (p.xi). For Selfe and Hawisher (2004), time and life transitions are important and 'new forms of literacy don't simply accumulate' (p.213):

> Rather, they have life spans: they emerge; they overlap and compete with pre-existing forms; they accumulate, significantly, perhaps, in periods of transition, but they also eventually fade away.
>
> (Selfe and Hawisher, 2004, p.213)

In 'Relinquishing the Practices of a Lifetime', Hamilton (2008) 'draws on ethnographic and case study data from a variety of sources to explore the changing social practices of literacy across the lifespan' (p.63) and discusses 'the overlaying of new competencies on old' (p.69). Along with the notions of surplus (Brandt, 2009) and layering (Selfe and Hawisher, 2004), Hamilton's (2008) paper also stresses that ageing 'involves both expansion and retreat from familiar literacy practices' (p.63).

The notion of literacy surplus, suggested by Brandt (2009), illustrates how a narrative representation produced from the standpoint of people might differ from one produced from the perspective of the ruling relations. By beginning an inquiry from the standpoint of people as opposed to from objectified modes of knowing, literacy can be understood as something

which does not 'simply accumulate' (Selfe and Hawisher, 2004, p.213) and, instead, as practices which 'change across the lifespan', with 'the overlaying of new competencies on old' (Hamilton, 2008, p.69).

The concepts of surplus, layering, expansion and retreat are also relevant in relation to Barton's (2010) work which examines 'the writing practices associated with the photo sharing site Flickr' (p.109). Here, Barton (2010) explores how literacy practices 'are currently being transformed by the possibilities offered by new technologies', focusing specifically on 'what is happening to writing as people take up new opportunities on the internet' (p109), and concludes that 'the activities which people are engaging include new practices' (p.121):

> ... it is clear that some things people are doing, like creating a wedding album or sharing a photo with a friend or relative who lives at a distance, consist of carrying out existing practices in new ways. And, for several people, their engagement with Flickr began with a desire to continue existing practices. However, once people saw the affordances of the medium, they extended what they did into new practices. Their new practices included a range of specific activities such as commenting on and evaluating photos taken by other people, classifying their own photos and making links between different photos. Most people said they had not done these things before, particularly with people they did not know offline.

> (Barton, 2010, p.121)

Technological advancement is altering 'the whole notion of vernacular', with vernacular writing gaining 'increasing importance' (Barton, 2010, p.124). Barton's (2010) work suggests that new opportunities for vernacular writing, such as Flickr, give 'rise to new practices which embody different values from dominant literacies' (p.122). New technologies are therefore not only changing 'the core notion of vernacular' (Barton, 2010, p.122), but are also resulting in the production and sharing of new and vernacular knowledge. The example of Flickr illustrates how rapid technological change can provide new possibilities for people (Barton, 2010, p.122) and result in a surplus, rather than a deficit, of literacy practices (Brandt, 2009, p.xi). Within the deficit perspective of literacy there is no consideration of the effects of social change on people's uses of and relationships with different literacies, but the concepts of surplus (Brandt, 2009), layering (Selfe and Hawisher, 2004), expanse and retreat (Hamilton, 2008) offer new ways of understanding literacies across the lifespan. The choice of these two particular narratives in this study allows for an exploration of this.

1.9   The research questions

By focusing on adult literacy learners' Skills for Life narratives and biographical narratives, this study explores important questions about identity and the meanings assigned to literacy learning within each. Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' provides an exciting perspective from which to explore the following research questions:

1. Within their Skills for Life narratives, what identities are constructed for the adult learners?

2. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do the adults construct for themselves?

3. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within each of the two narratives?

4. What are the similarities and differences between the identities constructed within each representation?

5. What are the similarities and differences between the meanings assigned to the literacy programme within each representation?

6. What implications do these similarities and differences have for practice, policy and research?

1.10   Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced Dorothy Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' as a fundamental starting point for this research. In her sociology, Smith (2005) distinguishes between the 'ruling relations' and the 'standpoint of people', a distinction which forms the starting point of this study. This research focuses on two different narrative representations of twelve adult literacy learners. The first narrative representation is informed by the 'ruling relations' (Smith, 2005) and is that contained within the ILP, a document produced as a result of

participants' enrolment on an Adult Literacy course and used to guide their progress through it. The second narrative representation begins from the 'standpoint of people' (Smith, 2005) and is that contained within participants' biographical narratives, a text produced as a result of participation within this research project.

The chapter has outlined the three key conceptualisations of literacy (St. Clair, 2010). While the social practices perspective is fundamental to the design of this research, the Skills for Life Strategy is informed by both the functional and cognitive approaches. A discussion of four Skills for Life policy documents published between 1999 and 2011 has illustrated how Adult Literacy policy in England has become increasingly focused upon one particular aspect of adults' lives: their participation in the workplace. This chapter has therefore illustrated how the influence of different conceptualisations of literacy can result in different representations and subjectivities of adult literacy learners, resulting in the privileging of particular epistemologies. The two different narrative representations of focus in this study are therefore understood as having the potential to represent, produce and privilege different identities and knowledges. The following chapter will now focus on the first of these narrative representations, the Skills for Life ILP – explaining the study's focus on the ILP, describing what the ILP is and its role within adult literacy education.

Chapter 2: The Role of the ILP in the Skills for Life Classroom

As introduced in Chapter 1, this study begins with Dorothy Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' and focuses on two different narrative representations of adult literacy learners. The first narrative representation, informed by the 'ruling relations' (Smith, 2005), is that represented by the ILP, a document produced as a result of participants' enrolment on Adult Literacy programmes. The second narrative representation, beginning from the 'standpoint of people' (Smith, 2005), is that represented by participants' biographical narratives, a text produced as a result of participation in this research project. The focus of this chapter is the first of these two narratives, the ILP, with Chapters 3 and 4 addressing the biographical narrative.

2.1 The ILP as a textual representation of learner identity: what it is and how it is used

The adult literacy ILP is a formative assessment tool designed to record students' learning goals and the progress made in achieving these. The ILP document incorporates a range of paperwork and form-filling practices which require discussion and negotiation between tutors and their learners. The design, content and use of an ILP differ across institution and individual classroom, being influenced by the provider, administration, provision type, tutor and learner. Illustrating the content of an ILP, Hamilton (2009) refers to the following diagram:

Figure 1. The ILP as the heart of the learning process (adapted from training materials developed by the Skills for Life Quality Initiative; see www.sflqi.org.uk [accessed March 2006] © Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA))
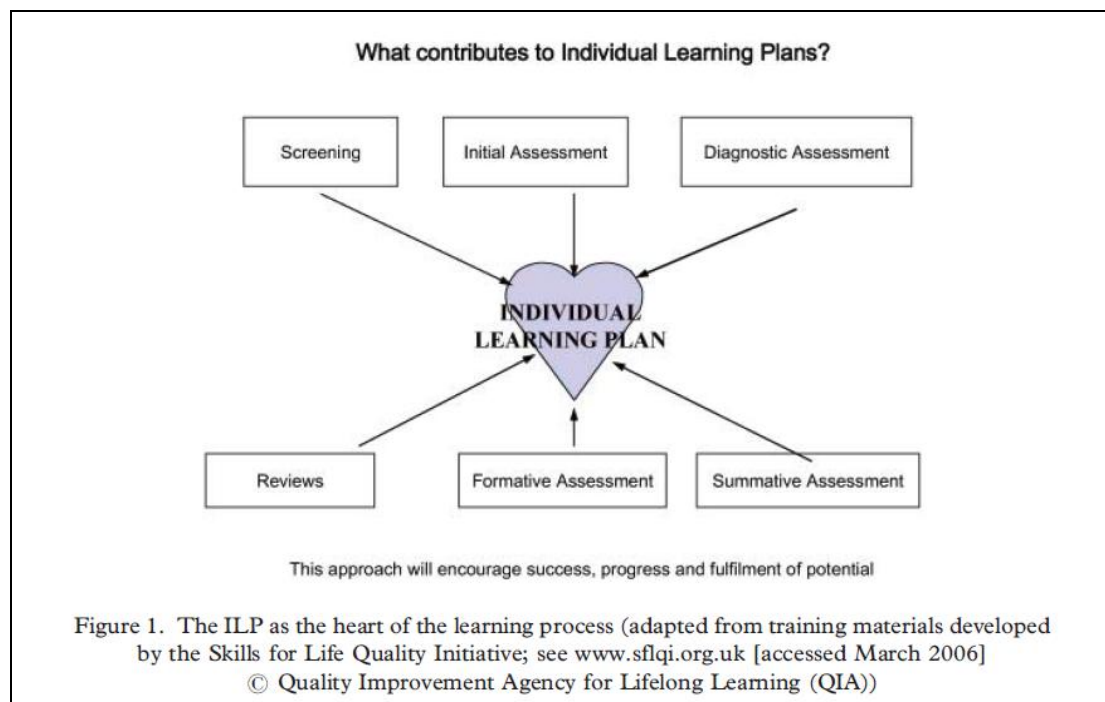
Figure 2.1 (Hamilton, 2009, p.225)

An important feature of the adult literacy ILP is the way in which it links to a number of other documents, including the various forms of initial and diagnostic assessments completed by learners in the early stages of a course; the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (Read-Write-Plus, 2001), used to record and measure the outcomes of diagnostic and formative assessments; and the National Test, taken by learners working at Levels 1 and 2 of the Core Curriculum (Read-Write-Plus, 2001). As illustrated in the above diagram, policy discourse metaphorically positions 'the ILP 'at the heart of the teaching and learning process'' (Hamilton, 2009, p.225). The guidance provided to organisations and their tutors regarding ILP documentation, however, is loosely framed and 'permissive' (Hamilton, 2009):

The loose framing of the guidance, I would suggest, far from being a flaw or a lapse in a rational system of accountability, is crucially important in enrolling

practitioners as active participants in the social project of accountability. They have no choice but to respond to the common imperatives of audit and inspection, since the funding and reputation of their organisation is at stake, and ultimately their own jobs. In order to respond effectively and with minimum disruption to the learners and to their colleagues, they have to engage actively and inventively with the problems of designing and administering the ILP.

(Hamilton, 2009, p.233)

The 'permissive guidance' regarding ILP paperwork sees tutors 'enrolled into the system's goals as active mediators' (Hamilton, 2009, p.239). As a result, ILPs differ across providers and individual classrooms, with institutions and tutors interpreting and responding to the paperwork requirements in different ways. As discussed in Chapter 9, the ILPs collected in this study illustrate many of the differences that can exist between ILPs which are created and used in different institutions and individual classrooms, as a result of 'permissive guidance' (Hamilton, 2009). Despite a number of differences in the form and content of ILPs, however, there are key shared features across institutional sites including those outlined by Hamilton (2009, p.225) in the diagram featured at the beginning of this chapter:

- Screening
- Initial Assessment
- Diagnostic Assessment
- Reviews
- Formative Assessment
- Summative Assessment

This research focuses on the ILP as one particular representation of adult literacy learners' experiences and identities. The above features of an ILP shape 'teaching and learning relationships' in the literacy classroom (Hamilton, 2009, p.222), with learners' identities 'shaped through the categories into which their experience is translated' (Hamilton, 2009, p.239):

[Learners] are arranged into levels of competence, labelled by learning style, positioned as inexpert in the learning process as SMART targets determine what is of value for them to study and what should be disregarded.

(Hamilton, 2009, p.239)

For adults enrolling on a literacy programme, the ILP is often 'one of the first texts that [they] encounter and they are revisited at regular intervals' throughout the course (Burgess, 2008, p.51). Discussing the ILP document, Burgess (2008) explains that:

one of their functions is to construct literacy and literacy learning according to the definitions sanctioned by policy. In so doing they also construct the identities of teachers and learners by specifying the abilities which comprise desirable identities

(Burgess, 2008, p.51)

Despite the differences across providers and classrooms, the ILP can be understood as fulfilling the same role across different institutional sites within adult literacy education. The

following pages explore the significance of the ILP both within and beyond adult literacy education, illustrating why such texts are worthy of research attention.

2.2   The ILP in context: social change, the knowledge society and the textualisation of the workplace

This section interprets the significance of the ILP in the context of key sociocultural changes, illustrating how the analysis of a text such as the ILP transgresses the boundaries of adult literacy education and is relevant to many aspects of social life. The following pages outline some of the key social changes that have resulted in increasing textualisation, focus on paperwork, and emphasis on documents such as the adult literacy ILP. As will be discussed, the result of this is an increasing textual presence and power in people's lives.

2.3   Social change: technologies, audit and textualisation

In *The Anthropology of Writing*, Barton and Papen (2005) explain that 'much contemporary social change brings with it an increasing 'textualisation' of social interaction' (p.5). It is therefore important to view documents such as the adult literacy ILP as the result of increasing textualisation driven by social change. Economic changes, for example, were discussed in the previous chapter, in particular the move away from goods production to the

emergence of a knowledge-based economy. The impact of such changes on education includes an increasing focus on the written text. Rather than material goods, in the knowledge economy it is knowledge itself that is the commodity. The knowledge economy has contributed to the increasing textualisation of contemporary life, with writing and the written text now more important than ever. Brandt (2009) explains that 'Writing is at the heart of the knowledge economy' because it puts 'knowledge in tangible, and thereby transactional, form' (p.117). Writing in a knowledge economy is therefore 'hot property' and increasing textualisation can be seen as making 'the knowledge economy viable' (Brandt, 2009, p.117).

As Brandt (2009) discusses, industrialization created a 'crisis in information', and new technologies were offered as 'a remedy' to this (p.x). Technological advancements in the new information age have seen significant social change, with new technologies increasingly commonplace in all domains of life including the home and the workplace. Selfe and Hawisher (2004) trace 'technological literacy as it has emerged over the last few decades within the United States' (p.3) explaining that technologies, such as personal computers, 'have become so ubiquitous that their many effects are becoming increasingly invisible' (p.6). Along with the affordability of personal computers, the introduction of the World Wide Web in the 1990s has also provided new opportunities for people to access and publish information, thereby interacting and exchanging knowledge in ways never before experienced. Digital technologies have therefore contributed to the emergence of 'the information age', in turn contributing to the increased textualisation of social life through new media. Put simply, in the guise of new technologies, a great many texts, both screen- and paper-based, have become familiar and accepted parts of contemporary life in the same way that technologies have. As Barton and Papen (2010) discuss, broad cultural shifts are

consequently taking place in 'the nature of knowledge and the nature of communication' (p.4). As a result of the social changes outlined here there is now an increasing focus on documentation, evidence and accountability, including texts such as the Skills for Life ILP.

2.4   Audit, accountability and documentary evidence

The role of the ILP document in adult literacy education has changed in recent years. As described by Burgess (2008), for example, ILPs 'originated as a part of the effort to establish student-centred pedagogy' with 'the potential to act as a democratising influence in adult education since they can be treated as a contract between student and tutor' (p.51). The ILP, however, has since acquired 'added significance' (Burgess, 2008, p.51):

> Since the inception of the UK government's Skills for Life policy (DfES 2001, 2003a), ILPs have also been used to measure the performance of teachers and students, and are now used by a variety of other interested parties: managers may use them as part of the processes of quality assurance and staff appraisal; administrators use them when claiming funding for courses; and they may be presented to inspectors as evidence that required standards are being met. They thus play a crucial role in systems of performance management and accountability.
>
> (Burgess, 2008, p.51)

ILPs were originally designed as a formative assessment tool but have since become an important 'part of a system of performance measurement based on quantifiable indicators of

teaching and learning' (Hamilton, 2009, p.221). It is therefore important that the Skills for Life ILP be viewed as an auditable document that is inextricably bound up with funding requirements, associated with accountability and the result of an 'audit culture' (Strathern, 2010).

Accountability is not a new phenomenon and 'Its dual credentials in moral reasoning and in the methods and precepts of financial accounting go back a long way' (Strathern, 2000, p.1). As the Skills for Life ILP illustrates, accountability has, in recent decades, 'acquired a social presence of a new kind' (Strathern, 2000, p.1):

> ...as far as higher education is concerned, some rather specific procedures have come to carry the cultural stamp of accountability, notably assessments which are likened to audit. The concept of audit in turn has broken loose from its moorings in finance and accounting ...
>
> (Strathern, 2000, p.2)

Although Strathern's (2000) focus is on higher education, the above quote illustrates how accountability now permeates many aspects of social life, giving it 'the power of a descriptor seemingly applicable to all kinds of reckonings, evaluations and measurements' (Strathern, 2000, p.2). In relation to the workplace, Tusting (2009) explains that 'Heightened levels of accountability are demanded, in an 'audit culture' (Strathern, 2010) or 'audit society' (Power, 1997) in which workers are required to record their practices in great detail' (p.7). Importantly, then, the 'specific procedures' that 'carry the cultural stamp of accountability' (Strathern, 2000, p.2) required to fulfil the requirements of an audit culture all inevitably involve texts of some description. To return to Brandt's (2009) quote cited earlier, 'Writing

is at the heart of the knowledge economy' because it puts 'knowledge in tangible, and thereby transactional, form' (p.117). Within an audit culture, texts serve as *evidence* that is both tangible and transactional, but also, and importantly, measurable. The power of increasing textualisation can be understood in the context of 'the new work order' which Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) explain is:

> largely about trying to create new social identities or new kinds of people: new leaders, new workers, new students, new teachers, new citizens, new communities, even new 'private' people who are supposed to dissolve the separation between their lives outside work and their lives inside it.
>
> (Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996, p.xi)

The increasing textualisation of contemporary life, and the emphasis on textual evidence, has also been instrumental in the emergence of a learning society. Referred to in Chapter 1 in relation to historical developments in adult literacy education, it is important to return to the concept of a learning society here in relation to increasing textualisation. Recent decades have seen the emergence of a learning society in which qualifications are more necessary than ever and where 'Learning and earning have now become equated in many discourses, such that to be able to earn requires the capacity, opportunity and necessity to learn' (Edwards and Usher, 2008, p.p.78-79). Not only are people required to compete in the learning society, demonstrating evidence of their abilities and skills through up-to-date qualifications in order to secure new employment.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements and increasing job insecurity now mean that participation within the learning society is required on an ongoing basis. Doing a

job is not now enough; textualisation has led to the requirement of texts as evidence of one's capabilities. Participation in the knowledge economy dictates that people gain evidence, and therefore accreditation, of their abilities. In the learning society, texts are now important evidence of someone's formal learning experiences. Chapter 1 introduced the notion of the commodification of skills, and the increasing reference to learners as 'customers' within policy discourse (Boyd and Uden, 2008, p.p.1-2) illustrates that, along with skills, qualifications themselves have become necessary commodities in the learning society.

The effects of a learning society on education have been profound with the increase 'in participation across the post-compulsory system' resulting in a focus on the assessment and certification of learning and, in turn, an 'attempt to standardise assessment methods' (Ecclestone, 2003, p.4). As the Skills for Life ILP illustrates, the learning society and the pressures of an audit culture have resulted in increased textualisation for educators, with funding-related targets making it compulsory to document evidence of students' learning and achievement. Ecclestone (2003), for example, discusses the increasing focus on assessment and certification within post-compulsory education in the past twenty years, resulting in conflicting ideas about what counts as achievement (p.1). Since the introduction of the Skills for Life strategy, accreditation-related targets have become increasingly important in adult literacy, language and numeracy education, influencing definitions of progress and achievement. The Skills for Life ILP exemplifies the emergence of a learning society, the increasing emphasis on accreditation-related targets, and the influence of 'audit culture' (Strathern, 2010) on many aspects of social life. The following pages draw on the examples of two workplaces to explore the effects that increasing textualisation has upon people's identities.

2.5   The role of texts in the workplace: two examples

As a result of evidence-based policy strategies (see HMSO, 1999), policy reforms across many sectors have in recent years placed an emphasis on performance-related targets. Increasing accountability demands discussed in previous pages have, in turn, created an emphasis on documenting evidence, contributing to the increasing textualisation of workplaces.   To illustrate this, this section traces the policy reform and increasing textualisation of two educational workplaces in the past decade: Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and Literacy Language and Numeracy (LLN).

Discussing what textualisation means for employees in the workplace, Iedema (2003) asserts that textualisation must be viewed as 'a particular syndrome of recent organizational developments that foreground worker interactivity around discourses about the work' (Iedema, 2003, p.1). Iedema and Scheeres (2003) argue that 'in the contemporary workplace, workers across a variety of sites are being confronted with having to renegotiate their knowing, their doing, and their worker identity' (p.316). Workers in many contexts, for example, are now required to 'produce discourse that goes outside the boundaries of their conventional worker habitus' and 'engage in discourse about their work, with others with whom they would not normally negotiate the details of their work' (Iedema and Scheeres, 2003, p.317). As a result, Iedema and Scheeres (2003) believe that organizational change has led to the 'textualization' of work and 'what we might term the 'reflexivization' of worker identity' (p.317). Textualization is therefore 'about shifting the goal posts from doing work with talk enabling it, towards talking about and re-negotiating work, other and self' (Iedema

and Scheeres, 2003, p.334), affecting and even disrupting the traditional sense of work and worker identity:

> First, it affects how they speak and what they say about themselves and their work, since they are now speaking to new people in ways not practised before. Second, it requires a distancing from the work and from self, since textualization involves re-presenting what is tacit the better to 'colonise the future' (Giddens 1991). Third, it creates a tension with the occupational or professional 'ideal' into which workers have been socialized, since it is not so much about confirming existing authority, tacit practice, or specialization, as about working and (re) negotiating what is done in teams. Last, it opens up (and imposes) multiple speaking positions, in that textualization challenges stabilized roles, tasks, identities, boundaries, and hierarchies.
>
> (Iedema and Scheeres, 2003, p.332)

From this perspective, the power and pervasiveness of texts is further highlighted, illustrating, as Gee et al (1996) suggest, that texts are in fact active in constructing and positioning people, in this case employees, in particular ways. In the following pages, parallels are drawn between ECEC and LLN to further illustrate this.

Both the *National Childcare Strategy* (DfES, 1997), of which ECEC is a part, and the *National Literacy Strategy*, encompassing Skills for Life, resulted from 'the neo-liberal vision set out by a, then newly elected, government', and both have received 'a decade of sustained and high-profile policy attention' (Osgood, 2009, p.734). Parallels between the two are made all the more interesting given that each has received similar 'attention and direction

... through policy reform' (Osgood, 2009, p.734). As a result of policy reform, 'increasing accountability demands' have resulted in the increased textualization of both the Skills for Life and Childcare workplace (Tusting, 2010).

There are a number of similarities between LLN and ECEC, rooted in the increasing textualisation of these workplaces. One shared characteristic is the attention paid to professionalizing their respective workforces. In relation to the Childcare sector in England, Osgood (2009) explains how recent policy 'has foregrounded the importance of raising the qualifications of the workforce' with a focus on 'simplifying and streamlining the sector so that career pathways are less confusing and opportunities for progression more readily understandable and available' (p.p. 733-734). Hamilton and Hillier (2006) document similar changes in policy and practice in adult literacy education, illustrating the predominantly voluntary nature of the workforce prior to the sector's raised political profile (p.111). Another key similarity is that the policy discourse of both Skills for Life and ECEC increasingly focus on the UK's economy, with each policy positioned as fundamental in achieving economic prosperity. The reform of the Childcare profession was 'shaped by calls to provide a 'good start' and prepare young children as the citizens and workers of the future' (Osgood, 2009, p.733). Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 1, adult literacy education is adopting an increasingly 'enterprise' approach in which education is 'primarily concerned with developing people to be good and efficient workers' (Trowler, 2003, p.116). This is clear from the policy documents discussed in the previous chapter. In the Leitch Review (Leitch, 2006), for example, the benefits of improving people's literacy and numeracy skills are stated as being that employers get a 'much more productive workforce' and therefore business, and that individuals' 'employment and pay prospects' are enhanced (Leitch, 2006, p.p.60-61). More recent coalition documents continue the focus on 'vocationally-oriented

literacy education' (RaPAL, 2011, p.2) by focusing on 'young adults who lack English and Maths skills, and those adults not in employment' (BIS, 2011a, p.13).

In Childcare, Osgood (2009) illustrates how, through policy discourse, 'government is orchestrating a particular discursive landscape, one that heralds ECEC as central to the economic prosperity of society' (p.735) while, at the same time, also promoting a negative view of the sector:

> When government policy is understood as both text and discourse, as argued by Bowe, Ball, and Gold (1992), it becomes possible to conceive of policy-makers seeking to establish a 'correct reading' or the promotion of certain discursive truths. Within government policy it is possible to trace the ways in which the ECEC workforce in England has been constructed in contradictory ways: as the salvation of society *and* as shambolic/disordered.
>
> (Osgood, 2009, p.735, italics in original)

The contradictory construction discussed here by Osgood (2009) in relation to the ECEC workforce is referred to by Ball (2001) as 'the discourse of derision':

> In the UK in the 1990s we have experienced processes of 'education reform' which have had profound implications for almost all aspects of the professional lives and work of educators. What it means to be a teacher and to be an academic have been thoroughly re-worked. From the nursery school to the university a common strategy of disciplinary tactics, drawing in particular on forms of performativity (Ball 2000), has been deployed. These tactics have been facilitated

in each case by the incitement of a discourse of derision which creates a climate

within which change appears necessary and becomes possible.

(Ball, 2001, p.265)

For Ball (2001), 'the discourse of derision' in educational research 'has been articulated via a set of reports and interventions from within and outside of the research 'community'' (p.265), and the same may be said of LLN and CECE. In both, the workforces have been professionalised, with the economy placed at the heart of policy objectives and it is, in part, through the increasing textualisation of the LLN and CECE workplaces and the role of texts that these changes have been achieved. The increasing paperwork can be understood as providing multiple platforms or vehicles for dominant policy discourse to establish and reinforce itself. In CECE, for example, Osgood (2009) argues that particular discourses about the sector and its employees are normalised through the use of government policy documents which are referred to by Osgood (2009) as 'normalising technologies'.

Through such texts, Osgood (2009) argues, the ECEC worker is 'objectified', 'becomes dehumanised and takes on a mechanistic quality', in short being 'charged with responsibility' for 'the execution of government policy' (p.736). In a similar way, ILPs can be understood as a normalising technology within the discursive landscape of LLN and, as Hamilton (2009) describes, a 'key technology of alignment between local and systematic practices and identities' (p.222). Using ILPs as an example, Burgess (2008) discusses 'the importance of literacy practices in the implementation of education policy' (p.49), illustrating how ILPs can be considered objects which co-opt both teacher and learner into the Skills for Life Strategy:

Although it is true that the actions and intentions of policy makers are in themselves local, I would suggest that they are also global to the extent that they have the power to travel into many different contexts, often as a result of being embodied in objects. However, the same does not apply to the actions and intentions of teachers and students, the local actors who are co-opted into the systems and processes of policy.

(Burgess, 2008, p.50)

This is yet another example of the power of texts. As explained in this chapter's introduction, there is no one ILP design but, instead, the guidance for structuring and completing ILPs is ''permissive' in the sense that it offers templates rather than forms, encouraging teachers to develop their own locally appropriate paperwork and procedures' (Hamilton, 2009, p.232). In the same way that Childcare workers are discursively 'fabricated through text' (Osgood, 2009, p.735) and positioned as responsible for the success of the ECEC reforms, Skills for Life practitioners too are enrolled as 'active participants' in the *Skills for Life* Strategy (Hamilton, 2009, p.233). This illustrates the importance of the ILP as a 'normalising technology' (Osgood, 2009, p.734) and 'key technology of alignment' (Hamilton, 2009, p.222) in establishing the dominance of specific discourses. The dominant discourse is that of adult learners who lack skills and, as a result, it is adult learners themselves who are 'charged with responsibility' for the success, and failures, of government policy (Osgood, 2009, p.736). As Osgood (2009) puts it, while 'Government staunchly adheres to top-down reform for the sector', it 'simultaneously attributes shortcomings to wavering individual responsibility' (p.738). This also relates to Iedema's (2003) assertion that post-bureaucracy 'is a phenomenon that is rarely realized in a 'pure' form' (p.2):

Instead, what is evident is that many organizations have adopted a post-bureaucratic rhetoric, while at the same time retaining traditional structural hierarchies, expert and specialization boundaries, and procedures and processes whose intent is top-down control rather than bottom-up facilitation ... Often, then, there are tensions between post-bureaucratic aspirations and traditional work practices.

(Iedema, 2003, p.2)

Through the complex discursive landscape of LLN, of which the ILP is a part, it becomes evident that 'variation and deviation from that conveyed in government discourse becomes unthinkable because it is so persuasively presented as obvious and necessary' (Osgood, 2009, p.738):

...policy discourses are cultivated and carefully crafted to have certain effects. They make political ambitions and goals for ECEC seem logical and necessary ... Therefore the ways in which the ECEC workforce is fabricated through text is understood as both deliberate and intentional. The deficit discourse identified throughout the policy texts, and which is detectable more broadly in public discourse, promotes particular discursive truths or persuasive fictions ...

(Osgood, 2009, p.746)

There are, therefore, a number of similarities between the two examples of the Skills for Life ILP and the increasing textualization of the Childcare workplace. Indeed, when ILPs are understood as a 'normalising technology' (Osgood, 2009) and 'key technology of alignment' (Hamilton, 2009), similarities become apparent between LLN and the textualization of

numerous other contexts. Like Osgood's (2009) work regarding the Childcare sector, Sreide (2007) explores the discursive construction of teacher identity through Norwegian policy documents.

Similarly, Sachs (2001) focuses on 'issues of the professional identity of teachers in Australia under conditions of significant change in government policy and educational restructuring' (p.149), with these changes including increasing textualization. Stronach et al (2002) explore 'the ways in which 'discursive dynamics' come to re-write' professional identity' for teachers and nurses, in 'what the authors term an 'economy of performance'' (p.109). The 'era of Quality Assurance Mechanisms' affecting nurse education in the UK is also the subject of Horrock's (2006, p.4) work. The relationship between audit culture and the UK government's educational policy is the focus of Hodkinson's (2008) paper, which concludes that 'audit and evidence-based practice misunderstand and misrepresent learning' (p.302). Also, in managerial work, Kerfoot (2003) suggests that the increasing emphasis on professionalism has arisen 'in tandem with the growth and proliferation of bureaucracies', and illustrates how an organization's practices 'serve to reproduce and reinforce predominant conceptions of what 'counts' as professional work' (p.205).

The effects of textualization on worker identity, or the 'reflexivization' of worker identity (Iedema and Scheeres, 2003, p.317), is therefore apparent in the LLN sector (Tusting, 2010), ECEC (Osgood, 2009), teaching (Sreide, 2007; Sachs, 2001), nursing (Stronach et al, 2002; Horrock, 2006), educational policy (Hodkinson, 2008), and managerial work (Kerfoot, 2003). This literature is concerned with public service workplaces and focuses on the effects of textualization on employees and their workplace practices and identities. As this chapter suggests, however, textualisation plays an equally important and powerful role beyond the

workplace and can be understood, for example, as producing particular representations of adult learners' experiences and identities through documents such as the Skills for Life ILP.

2.6   Dorothy Smith and textually mediated worlds

Chapter 1 introduced Dorothy Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' as a key starting point of this research.   Another aspect of Smith's (1999; 2005) work is also useful here in conceptualising the role of the ILP in the Skills for Life classroom: that of 'textually mediated social worlds'.   As illustrated in the previous pages of this chapter, a number of social changes mean we now live in what Smith (1999) refers to as a 'textually mediated world'.   Importantly, texts have become ubiquitous and in relation to the workplace, for example, audit practices are increasingly accepted as 'mundane, inevitable parts of a bureaucratic process' (Strathern, 2000, p.2).   The textualisation of contemporary life beyond the workplace further compounds the ubiquity of texts; people are accepting of the new textual and digital landscape, and the roles of texts go unnoticed.   As Smith (2005) points out, however, texts in fact fulfil important and powerful roles within social institutions:

> Institutions exist in that strange magical realm in which social relations based on texts transform the local particularities of people, place, and time into standardized, generalized, and , especially, translocal forms of coordinating people's activities.

> (Smith, 2005, p.101)

This chapter has illustrated how adults' literacy skills and abilities become standardised through texts such as the ILP and the ways in which such texts appropriate notions of learning, progress and achievement. Texts such as the ILP therefore connect people 'into relations elsewhere' (Smith, 2005, p.101). Smith (2005) points out, however, that the power of texts is compounded by their '*local thereness*' (p.102, italics in original): while paperwork is playing an increasingly important role within many aspects of social life, texts are not recognised 'as being "active" in coordinating what we are doing with another or others' (Smith, 2005, p.102, italics in original):

Textualisation of the workplace has led to increasing paperwork pressures for employees across many sectors (see Troman, 2000; Jeffrey and Troman, 2004). For adult literacy tutors, paperwork such as the ILP can occupy a significant amount of time both inside and outside the classroom. When interviewing tutors in adult education in Canada, Darville (2002, p. 63) observed that 'talk often turns to "the burden of paperwork", even when no questions have directed attention to it'. Equally, for adult literacy tutors in England, ILPs are part of the 'endless change' within this sector in recent years (Edward *et al*., 2007). Hamilton (2009, p. 221) describes ILPs as 'something they frequently talk and worry about, but were nevertheless surprised that anyone would want to research'. While paperwork may represent a time-consuming burden for many, it can prove difficult to explore the role of texts such as the ILP. The problem with researching texts in the social sciences, as Smith (2005, p. 102) puts it, is 'their ordinary "inertia" … the local *thereness* of the text' ... however synonymous with inertia and the mundane that such texts have become, interactions with these texts

in fact play an active role in coordinating the activities and learning that take place.

<div align="right">(Varey and Tusting, 2012, p.106)</div>

The power of texts is demonstrated by Smith (1990) in her discussion of the 'social organization' of a text in which one woman, K, 'comes to be defined by her friends as mentally ill' (p.12). Smith (1990) provides a detailed analysis of this account and asserts that the analysis be treated 'not just as saying something about mental illness but as having a more general sociological relevance' (p.48). 'K is mentally ill' (Smith, 1990) illustrates a number of ways in which particular representations of people are constructed through texts. Smith's (1990) work illustrates, for instance, the 'Complex conceptual work' involved when interpreting the intended meaning of a text (p.15) and the ways in which texts authorize and privilege particular accounts to ensure certain interpretations are arrived at. Smith (1990) suggests that 'Such a social organizational analysis could be made of any such text' (p.48). All texts can therefore be understood as 'socially organized' (Smith, 1990, p.13); as having been informed by a number of decisions regarding, for example, the information that is included and left out:

> I have suggested that an alternative account of what happened is possible ... The reader / hearer [of the text] cannot go back to the personages of the original to recover material which might be relevant to an alternative construction. As a feature of the social organization, this may be contrasted with situations such as a court of law in which witnesses may be questioned to recover material making possible alternative accounts. Thus the construction of an alternative account in which K is not mentally ill is not possible on the basis of what is available.

Smith's (2005) notion of 'textually mediated social worlds' therefore reinforces the importance of focusing on the narrative representations contained within texts such as the Skills for Life ILP.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has been concerned with one of the two narratives of focus in this research, the Skills for Life ILP. It has explained the study's focus on the ILP, describing what the ILP is and its role within adult literacy education. Despite the differences in form and content of ILPs across individual sites, ILPs, it is argued, share key features which 'construct literacy and literacy learning' in particular ways and therefore 'construct the identities of teachers and learners' in the adult literacy classroom (Burgess, 2008, p.51).

The significance of the ILP has been discussed in relation to important social changes including the emergence of a knowledge economy and an audit culture, illustrating the relevance of this research beyond the boundaries of adult literacy education. As a result of the increasing textualisation of contemporary life, the chapter has discussed how people are accepting of the new textual and digital landscape, and the roles of texts go unnoticed and how, consequently, the power of texts is compounded by their '*local thereness*' (Smith, 2005, p.102, italics in original). As texts are often not recognised 'as being "active" in coordinating what we are doing with another or others' (Smith, 2005, p.102), it becomes increasingly important to explore them. Drawing on contexts and literature beyond LLN, this chapter has

highlighted the important role of the ILP – despite its many forms and uses - in relation to the representation of learners' identities in adult literacy education. Having focused on the ILP narrative in this chapter, Chapter 3 will now discuss the consultation process and pilot study which informed the methodologies used to construct participants' biographical narratives (please see Chapter 4 for the biographical methodology).

Chapter 3: The Consultation Process and Pilot Study:

The importance of trust when researching in the Lifelong Learning sector

3.1   Introduction

Trust is an important, and often overlooked, factor in facilitating 'stability, co-operation and cohesion' (Troman, 2000, p.335) between all members of the research process. As a result of significant policy-led changes in LLN in recent years, I considered trust to be an important consideration in ensuring the success of this project for all concerned. As a result, early in the planning stage of this study, I consulted with people working in the sector to inform research design decisions, with the following pages presenting the rationale behind this decision and the outcome of the consultation. The research was dependent upon gaining access to a number of participant-tiers and this chapter documents how access to LLN managers, tutors and their classrooms was achieved (the recruitment of learners to the main study is detailed in Chapter 4). Along with the consultation process, this chapter addresses the pilot study, illustrating how the lessons learned from each informed this research.

3.2   The 'turbulence' and 'waves' of endless change in the Learning and Skills sector: the importance of consultation

Writing in 2008, Hodgson, Spours and Steer (2008) describe the Learning and Skills sector as having been 'in a constant process of organisational change' since 2001 (p.115), highlighting the magnitude of change experienced in the sector in this short time. Referencing key Skills

for Life Strategy documents, Chapter 1 has outlined the changes in the policy discourse surrounding adult literacy education in the past decade. Because of 'its central role in economic competitiveness and inclusion', there has been 'a far greater priority on learning and skills' since 2001 but 'the price of attention has been close scrutiny and unrelenting policy intervention' (Hodgson, Spours and Steer, 2008, p.p.115-116).

An important example of the 'unrelenting policy intervention' discussed by Hodgson et al (2008) is the increased focus on funding and targets in the sector. Funding and targets have become 'a powerful cocktail' (Hodgson et al, 2007, p.217) in LLN, influencing teaching and learning in the sector. Hamilton and Hillier (2006), explain the extent to which Skills for Life 'provision is strictly controlled through funding, attached to targets and outcomes, and permitted only if it offers certain prescribed curriculum' (p.136). A fundamental aspect of the Skills for Life Strategy infrastructure was the introduction of National Tests for literacy and numeracy at Levels 1 and 2, tests which consist of forty multiple-choice questions. Hodgson et al (2007) explain how those working in LLN had 'ambivalent views' about the new national qualifications' because, while on the one hand they 'could be a real boost for learners', on the other hand they 'were described as 'narrow', measuring only reading and, to a lesser extent, spelling, while ignoring writing, speaking and listening' (p.219):

> More importantly, there was a real concern that accreditation linked to targets and funding had adversely affected both the organization of provision and the nature of teaching and learning, making it harder to meet learners' individual needs.
>
> (Hodgson et al, 2007, p.219)

In a 2001 report, Hamilton (2001) criticises the fact that writing is not tested and says that 'Studies of need … show that adults are more likely to need help with writing than with reading' (p.7). Hamilton and Hillier (2006) highlight how the issue of assessment also caused disagreement within and divided the Moser group (p.136). Assessment and accreditation are therefore contentious issues in LLN, with a key concern being the assumed link between assessment and progression. As Barton et al (2007) point out, the dominant discourse of the Skills for Life Strategy defines achievement and progression in relation to 'further education, higher qualifications and better jobs' (p.159).

At the time of this project's design, an important development taking place in literacy and numeracy provision was the introduction of new Functional Skills qualifications. Functional Skills refer to English, mathematics and ICT, and pilots began in September 2007 (Read-Write-Plus, 2009a). Following the pilots, Functional Skills began to replace Key Skills qualifications for learners aged 16-19 in 2010. For many working in adult education, however, the question of concern in recent years has been 'what happens to *Skills for Life* adult literacy and numeracy qualifications' when 'Functional Skills go live in 2010'? (Read-Write-Plus, 2009b, p.10). After a period of uncertainty, from September 2012, Functional Skills replace adult literacy and numeracy National Tests. Although many welcome this change and the replacement of the National Tests, Stanistreet (2012) highlights some of the concerns held by those working in the sector 'about the suitability of Functional Skills for all adults' (p.3):

> ...contributors [to this issue] raise important issues around the 'conceptual leap' that will be required of learners, the accessibility of Functional Skills for adults with learning difficulties, the speed of the transition and the need for support for

staff embedding Functional Skills in a range of qualification routes. Professional development will be a critical part of any solution.

<div align="right">(Stanistreet, 2012, p.3)</div>

This is the latest in a long line of changes in the sector. Drawing on data from their ESRC-funded Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), Edward, Coffield, Steer and Gregson (2007) discuss the 'extreme turbulence' experience by those working in the Learning and Skills sector between 2001 and 2007, and the 'climate of fear' that resulted from 'the pace of policy-led change' (p.155). The tutors and managers they interviewed who were working in FE, for example, 'described coping with endless change coming at them from all directions' (Edward et al, 2007, p.164):

> Examples cited included: changes in the senior management, structure and direction of the organization; changes in funding; changes of colleagues in the course team; changes in student support, advice and guidance services, and administrative support; changes in the college's electronic data management and audit systems and requirements for paperwork; changes in the requirements of awarding bodies; changes in targets for retention and achievement; and changes in quality-improvement systems within the organization.

<div align="right">(Edward et al, 2007, p.164)</div>

In another paper based on the same TLRP data, Hodgson, Edward and Gregson (2007) describe many of the participants as being 'professionals adept at 'riding the waves' of policy change', including 'adjusting to nationally prescribed changes to targets, curriculum, qualifications, inspection procedures, paperwork and above all, funding' (p.226). Awareness

and understanding of the turbulence and waves described has been fundamental to this research and informed my decision to approach the sector as a low-trust environment.

3.3   Researching in a low-trust environment

Teachers working in the Skills for Life sector have, as discussed, experienced significant changes and increasing demands on their professional practice in recent years, which have the potential to undermine trust and problematise access to the sector for research purposes. Focusing on primary school teachers' experiences of 'trust and distrust in their work', Troman (2000) considers the 'changing trust relations in high modernity', arguing that teacher stress is not simply a result of 'intensification of work and managerialism' (p.p.332-333). Teachers are, for example, increasingly 'engaged in the mutual surveillance and documenting of each others' activities', while managers 'monitor and appraise teachers and keep files on teachers' behaviour and performance' (Troman, 2000, p.350). In relation to this project, it is therefore insufficient to label LLN as a 'low-trust' sector simply because of an increase in tutors' workloads, and highlights the importance of exploring the sector in detail before designing and undertaking a research project.

Cara et al's (2008) 'Teacher Study' involved '1027 teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL in England from 2004 to 2007' and suggests that 'the impact of the Skills for Life strategy on those who teach and train Skills for Life learners is varied and multifaceted' (p.4):

> For some teachers, the strategy has given a new standing and respectability to the
> field and the career in which they have worked for many years. Others perceive

that the standards, targets and bureaucracy that have come with the initiative create administrative burdens and divert teachers from their commitment to social justice and their main business of improving learners' knowledge and skills. Many have welcomed the new professionalism that Skills for Life has brought; for others the strategy has emphasised divisions between different teachers in different education sectors.

(Cara et al, 2008, p.4)

In addition to the changes discussed above, since the introduction of the FE Workforce Reforms in 2007, all new LLN teachers have been required 'to hold both generic teaching qualifications and an appropriate L5 Diploma in their specialist area' with existing teachers also expected 'to gain appropriate qualifications or recognition of their status' (Kerwin, Appleby and McCulloch, 2010). Aware of issues arising from the new requirements within the North West of England, Kerwin, Appleby and McCulloch (2010) carried out a small-scale study to determine whether these issues were being experienced elsewhere in the country. Although the project's rationale relates to specific issues around training and CPD requirements, their findings indicate other problems within the sector and are useful in understanding why, to ensure a successful project design, Skills for Life must be considered a low-trust environment. Along with the above, other work also suggest that Adult Literacy specialists may be feeling devalued (Tusting, 2009; Barton et al, 2007) which could, in turn, result in tutors being despondent when invited to participate in projects such as this one. Discussing research within indigenous contexts, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains that 'The word itself, 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words' (p.1) - a reminder that, although LLN is a very different context, similar connotations may be attached to the word 'research'.

The success of this project hinged on the research design and the ability of this design to facilitate the development of trust between the researcher and both organisations' employees and adult learners. Gaining access to adult learners would require the development of relationships with Skills for Life tutors and managers which, in turn, requires an understanding and acknowledgement of the many issues which they currently face in relation to Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) practice and policy. Adult Literacy tutors are fundamental to this project for two reasons: first, they have regular contact with Adult Literacy learners and would provide the opportunities for meeting with and inviting adults to participate; and second, tutors are involved in the paperwork process and are therefore active agents in the construction of a learner's Skills for Life ILP narrative.

Miller (2004) is concerned with 'how we actually enter the worlds of those who are the focus of our research, particularly when our research concerns the experiences of communities that have developed a self-protective insularity in response to their experiences of marginalization and oppression' (p.217). Although those working within Skills for Life may not necessarily be considered marginalized or oppressed, the following section outlines why this project may be met with the 'self-protective insularity' discussed by Miller (2004). While discussions about access in difficult circumstances 'should presumably be available in the published reports of researchers who *have* gained access in their work with communities where issues of trust and access are particularly salient', Miller (2004) explains that 'these issues are rarely addressed in the reports of research conducted in such communities' (p.p.217-218). Emmel, Hughes, Greenhalgh and Sales (2007) echo this concern as they explain that 'little attention has been given to understanding the implications of the nature of the trust relationship between researcher and participant' when accessing hard-to-reach individuals and groups

(p.2). This chapter therefore openly acknowledges the issues around carrying out research in one low-trust environment, the LLN sector.

Both this chapter along with Chapter 1 illustrate some of the current issues within Skills for Life and the need to consult people working within the sector to inform the design of this research project. As Saunders, Pearce and Saunders (2009) discuss, carrying out research in a low-trust environment presents 'practical difficulties' of accessing participant voices, raises the issue of 'the role of 'gatekeepers'' and is important 'from a methodological perspective' in terms of 'which 'voices' [are] being captured in the search for an 'authentic voice'. This relates to this study because Skills for Life, when approached as a low-trust environment, presents some practical difficulties in relation to gaining access to Adult Literacy learners and highlights the role of organisations, in particular Adult Literacy tutors, as 'gatekeepers'. It is useful here to draw on Miller's (2004) distinction between two types of access, 'physical' and 'interpersonal':

> By physical access, I refer to the extent to which researchers are able to actually physically enter the boundaries of a particular community, as a prerequisite to gathering data from community members ... By interpersonal access, I refer to the extent to which researchers are able to actively engage community members as participants in their research. The failure to gain interpersonal access can occur when community members express a willingness to participate in a particular study, but then provide data that do not accurately reflect their actual feelings, beliefs, attitudes and/or behaviours.
>
> (Miller, 2004, p.p. 220-221)

Miller (2004) terms this '*illusory* interpersonal access' (p.221, italics in original) and warns that this 'can be a great threat to the validity of the data collected' (p.221). In this project's research design, the issue of access was important as it was considered insufficient to simply ensure that only physical access was granted by provider organisations. A consultation process was therefore designed which would explore tutors' responses to the proposed research project, determine what might both encourage and prevent participation, and engage in a dialogue in which the opportunity was available for tutors to inform the decision-making process. Along with tutors, managers were also invited to take part, as they are important to the project design for two reasons: if trust is to be established between researcher and a department then this would include both tutors and their managers; and where tutors expressed a desire to participate, permission would also be required from the relevant manager.

3.4   The consultation process

Having decided on a 'low trust' approach, a consultation was carried out in January 2009. In total, two managers and seven tutors based in the North West of England, all of whom were already known to me, were invited to take part in the consultation. It was not possible to consult everyone in person and consequently three tutors and one manager were consulted by email. The email consultation involved respondents reading through a brief PowerPoint presentation which outlined the rationale behind the proposed study, the project's main aims and the intended methodological approaches (see Appendix 1). The final PowerPoint slide was aimed at prompting feedback from respondents and contained the following questions:

If you were invited to participate in this project, what would your initial reactions be?

What questions would you have?

Are there any constraints within your workplace that would affect your decision to participate?

How much involvement would you like to have in the project?

What might encourage you to / prevent you from participating?

Are there any issues that you foresee and can you offer any potential solutions to these?

Email responses were received from two tutors and, rather than a one-off email exchange, a number of emails were exchanged that developed a dialogue about the project. Upon receiving each tutor's initial comments, for example, points of clarification and questions were added in a different colour and returned, therefore prompting further responses. In addition to these two tutors, four other tutors and their manager were consulted by means of a focus group which was allocated a one-hour slot within the department's monthly meeting. This arrangement was suggested and arranged by one of the tutors following an email I had sent enquiring about the possibility of consulting with members of the department. Similar PowerPoint slides to those sent by email were presented to the group and a conversation ensued around the respondents' thoughts and comments about the project. With the participants' permission, this discussion was recorded and transcribed.

In total, one manager and six tutors were involved in this initial consultation process, with confidentiality guaranteed to all. In addition, participants were provided with documentary evidence of their participation should they wish to use this in their Continuing Professional

Development (CPD) files. This ensured that the act of consulting with Skills for Life professionals was beneficial not only to me as a researcher but also to those individuals involved, and was a means of acknowledging the time they had spent assisting in this process. It is important to note that respondents in this consultation process worked within two very different Skills for Life provider organisations. The two tutors consulted by email were working in a College of Further Education, delivering Adult Literacy workshop provision to adults, the majority of whom had self-referred. In contrast, the four tutors and manager involved in the focus group were all working for a local authority provider, with the majority of their provision being marketed at employees within the workplace. This difference was intentional as the consultation aimed to get feedback from people working in different contexts, engaging with both Learner Responsive and Employer Responsive providers. This distinction became important in the research and is discussed in later chapters.

3.5   Consultation findings and implications for the research design

Although provided with the same bullet points to prompt comments, respondents were not restricted by a particular format and therefore structured their feedback in a variety of ways. As a result, the consultation findings were analysed and are detailed below under the five emerging subtopics.

3.5.1   Questions about the study

In their feedback, respondents raised several questions relating to the proposed study, including whether participants would be learners who attend the same class or different classes. When asked to state a preference, tutors generally felt it would be better that they attended different classes (or at least not all the same) as not everyone in a group may wish to take part. Another question raised by several respondents related to the curriculum level at which participants are working and whether the study was seeking adults working at levels 1 and 2 or entry levels. In addition, tutors were keen to establish how often, for how long and the location of meetings between learners and the researcher. Although the logistics of meeting with adults outside of class time was thought to be potentially problematic, this was preferable to meetings taking part in class time. The project's final research design therefore ensured that details such as those identified here were made clear in the initial stages to ensure that tutors were able to make an informed decision regarding their participation. As adult learners would, at least at the start of the study, be attending a literacy class, it was important to ensure that their participation had as little impact as possible on class time.

3.5.2   Level of tutor involvement

The preferred level of tutor involvement differed with some feeling that, given their own workloads, they would like very little involvement, whilst also wishing to be kept up-to-date with the project's progress. Others, however, expressed a desire to be consulted regularly and informed about exactly what is being discussed with their adult learners. It was important that this project ensure that a similar level of participation is established with all tutors involved. Although tutors' preference was shown to differ, it was important to all

tutors that that they know enough about the project and its progress to be able to deal with any questions their learners might have. The final research design therefore addressed this need at an early stage, thereby ensuring tutors were kept up-to-date and informed throughout the process, particularly important while adults are attending their literacy programme.

3.5.3   Barriers to tutor participation

Several issues arose in the consultation process around tutor participation, highlighting the importance of addressing tutors' concerns. These included suggestions that current workload commitments and time-constraints may prevent participation, although tutors felt this very much depended on how the project was to be carried out and precisely what would be required of their time. All tutors also expressed the opinion that, should the research design appear to be too complex or invasive for learners, this would prevent them from participating. Overall, tutors felt they would require a clear illustration of the practicalities of the project, specifically relating to what would be involved and required of both them and the learners, to reach a decision about whether or not they would participate. Again, it was therefore important that, in the invitation stage of the project, all aspects of the project were made clear to tutors and their managers, and that the project design be kept as straight-forward as possible.

Feedback also highlighted the importance of considering the limitations of different provision types. For tutors teaching short literacy courses, for example, it was of concern that such limited timeframes may not allow much time for introducing and monitoring a project in any way. It may therefore deter tutors from facilitating access to their learners if this process appeared to infringe on class time. Another concern raised by tutors related to whether or

not, following their decision to participate, their managers would consent to the researcher accessing paperwork and other records, along with use of rooms and other requirements. This final point was a reminder that engaging with and securing the participation of literacy tutors is only one aspect of the organisational tier and highlighted the importance of establishing a rapport with tutors *and* managers within a Skills for Life department.

3.5.4   Barriers to learner participation

Feedback from the consultation raised some points about what tutors felt might encourage or prevent adults from participating in the project. While these remain the tutors' perceptions of what adult learners' concerns may be, they were nevertheless worthy of consideration. First, it was thought that adults may not wish to commit their own time, particularly given busy schedules and other commitments. This issue was therefore important when deciding when and where to meet with learners, with tutors suggesting that the most convenient time may be immediately before or after a class. The regular and continued attendance of learners was also raised as a potential barrier to participation. To maintain contact with participants irrespective of their course attendance, this final point suggested a need to keep the project separate from both the provision and organisation.

3.5.5 Incentives to participate

This consultation process highlighted the importance of the relationship between department, tutor and researcher, and in particular the fostering of trust between these different participants. Believing the work to be credible and that it may have an impact through, for example, published reports and articles was cited as important. All tutors were interested in evaluating the success of the work they do and it was suggested that this project may be one way of doing this.

In relation to the changes and demands outlined in the initial sections of this paper, all tutors felt it would be an incentive to take part in a project that challenges the current approach to adult literacy learners. One current concern, for example, is that LLN is being merged with Key Skills and some tutors felt this project may address the importance of this difference. At the invitation stage of this project, it would therefore be important to stress these elements to potential tutor-participants as this was cited as being unanimously important in the decision-making process.

It was suggested that the project would also be considered to be beneficial if it helps adult learners to improve their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. The potential benefits to adult learners were therefore stressed when inviting tutors to take part. Other incentives mentioned in feedback included the general prestige of being involved in research, along with the importance of gaining access to project findings and having their participation officially acknowledged. It was important in the design of this project, and indeed throughout the study, that Skills for Life tutors and managers were not simply used as a

means of gaining access to adult literacy learners but that instead a dialogue was established and maintained.

3.6 Recruiting providers and tutors

Following the consultation process, a brief telephone survey was carried out with Skills for Life managers within FE colleges in Lancashire over a week in March 2009. A total of eleven FE colleges in Lancashire were identified and contact was successfully made with ten. Nine surveys were carried out by telephone, while arrangements were made with one respondent to provide an email response. The survey consisted of three sections, reflecting the main areas of interest: the route(s) through which the department receives funding for its Skills for Life programmes; current provision on offer, including curriculum levels, delivery models and programme locations; and current research activities and commitments within the department (please see Appendix 2 for the protocol used when conducting the telephone survey). Along with gaining an insight into departments in relation to these three areas, the survey provided an opportunity to engage in informal conversation and gain an insight into other areas, including the number of full- and part-time tutors employed, and the department's current focus, priorities and concerns. Although initially intended as an information gathering activity, the survey provided an opportunity to build trust between researcher and potential participants and facilitated the development of a deeper understanding of different FE providers in Lancashire.

In the ensuing months, follow-up emails and phone calls to managers provided me with opportunities to invite tutors to participate in the project. This often entailed forwarding an

email invitation to the manager who then circulated it within the department, while in other organisations appointments were made to attend department meetings and present the research project to tutors.

As a result of the stages outlined here, the participation of four Adult Literacy tutors working within two Skills for Life providers in the North West was secured by the end of year 1. Meetings then took place with each of tutors to discuss logistical details around inviting their learners to take part.

3.7   The pilot study

The aim of the pilot study was to interview one adult learner, trialling the use of possible approaches, and two meetings took place with Johnny in March and April 2009. It was important to me that, in the life history interviews, participants felt able to steer conversations in the directions they wished, rather than me to dictate the focus of the interviews. In the process of the pilot study, I therefore wanted to try a number of different multimodal approaches to life history interviewing which might achieve this. Of equal importance, however, was to ensure the study would be a safe experience for the learner-participant. While participation in the study might empower adults 'by guiding them to a deeper understanding of their own lives' (Atkinson, 1998, p.22), it may also be an emotional experience for them. It was therefore an important consideration in the design of the pilot interviews that the participant was not made to feel obliged to answer questions or to reflect on life experiences which he may not wish to. The pilot study was therefore as important to strengthening the ethical underpinnings of the project as it was to the methodological design.

Raggatt (2006) advocates an approach to life story interviewing which allows 'for multiplicity in the way individuals go about constructing a sense of selfhood' (p.17) and uses a 'personality web protocol' containing a taxonomy of attachments to structure the life story interview:

TABLE 1.1
A Taxonomy of Attachments Comprising the *Personality Web Protocol*

People	Objects-in-the-world	Life events	Body orientations
1. Liked associate	1. Important possession (first)	1. Childhood, peak experience	1. Liked body part
2. Liked public figure	2. Important possession (second)	2. Childhood, nadir experience	2. Disliked body part
3. Disliked associate	3. Symbolic object	3. Adolescence, peak experience	3. Strong body part
4. Disliked public figure	4. Place-in-the-world (first)	4. Adolescence, nadir experience	4. Weak body part
5. Other important associate (first)	5. Place-in-the-world (second)	5. Adulthood, peak experience	
6. Other important associate (second)	6. Clothing, costume (first)	6. Adulthood, nadir experience	
	7. Clothing, costume (second)		
	8. Work of art or imagination		

Figure 3.1 (Raggatt, 2006, p.24)

Raggatt (2006) explains how this methodology provides 'a window into' the issues experienced by research participants throughout their lives (p.26). Rather than approaching the interviews with predetermined themes, as in Raggatt's (2006) above taxonomy, I sought a less structured approach which would allow participants to introduce the topics and themes *they* believe to be relevant to their life stories.

It was my intention, in the main study, to provide participants with activities that they could undertake in advance of the life history interviews and the pilot study was therefore an opportunity to trial the use of these. I considered such activities to be important for two reasons. First, given the personal nature of the interview process in this project, it was important that participants did not feel topics were being sprung on them, and that they instead felt prepared in advance of each interview, with an insight into what was to be

discussed. Gillham (2005) explains the importance of informing participants of the interview plans: first for the ethical reason 'that they can decide on whether they *agree* to the topic – which may be a highly personal one'; and second 'so they can reflect on what they might say and prepare themselves' (p.p.50-51, italics in original). In this respect, then, the structuring of life history interviews using activities would ensure participants were informed about and could prepare in advance for the focus of each interview. Secondly, I considered the activities to be important in providing participants with a variety of possibilities for structuring their life history stories. Atkinson (1998) explains that 'Because a life story is not the life experience itself but only a representation of it, we might say that telling a life story is a way of organizing experience and fashioning or verifying identity' (p.p.11-12). The pilot study was therefore an opportunity to trial the use of certain activities while ensuring the safety of the participants concerned.

As planned, reflective notes were recorded throughout this pilot study, immediately after the interviews and in the days and weeks which followed. Goodson (2001) advocates the recording of such reflections (p.31), and these notes proved useful when exploring methodological issues that arose as a result of these two meetings, and when deciding how the pilot experience would inform the main study. The following pages narrate the pilot study carried out with Johnny and present the lessons learned from this experience and how they came to inform the design of the main study (please see Appendix 3 for an excerpt from Johnny's biographical narrative, compiled from the interview data).

3.8   Seven lessons from the pilot study

Both meetings took place at Johnny's workplace, with the consent of his manager. Although it had originally been the intention that the interviews would take place in the manager's office, a conference room was vacant and offered instead. Although an unnecessarily large space, it did provide a quiet, and importantly a private, space in which to conduct the interview. In contrast, the manager's office was small and two administrators' workstations were located immediately outside the door. Fortunately, the conference room was also vacant on the second visit and was therefore used again. Miller (2000) discusses the importance of the interview location:

> Try for a quiet location where the interview will not be disturbed and where the respondent will feel at ease. Avoid bars and coffee shops unless they are quiet ones. If the site of the interview is the respondent's home or office, try to ensure that you will not be disturbed during the interview. Being interrupted by telephone calls often are the worst problem ...
>
> (Miller, 2000, p.86)

This pilot study highlighted the importance of interview location, particularly in relation to the personal nature of life history interviews. In the main study, it was decided that participating colleges be asked to provide a room for interviews, where the learners attend college-based classes. For participants enrolled on workplace programmes, however, it was decided that it would be more appropriate, and convenient, to conduct interviews in the workplace, as with Johnny.

The two meetings with Johnny were arranged through his literacy tutor and a brief meeting took place with the tutor prior to the start of interview 1 to discuss the arrangements regarding paperwork. A benefit to this was that the tutor was able to provide key information prior to the interview, for instance the importance of where Johnny would be seated in relation to the door. Having been informed of this, it was ensured that Johnny would be seated nearest to the door and, in all future interviews, the seating plan of interviews will be considered carefully. Although Johnny's dislike for 'being pinned in a corner' did arise, it was not until the later stages of interview 1 (page 13), highlighting the importance of the relationship between learners and their tutor. The tutor remained present for the first few minutes of the interview while project details and ethical issues were addressed, which was reassuring to the participant as he was extremely nervous.

Although meeting with the tutor proved to be beneficial, the reliance upon her to arrange the interviews also had its drawbacks. As all arrangements had been made in discussion with the tutor, the first contact between participant and researcher therefore took place in the first interview. The result of no contact taking place prior to interview 1 was that Johnny had not yet spoken directly to me, and, along with feeling nervous, was understandably wary about the project aims. Goodson's (2001) following point highlights an important reason for having some form of contact with participants prior to the first interview:

> Everyone has a notion of what research is, of what researchers want and expect, and of what research 'subjects' do. Often, this notion is based on ideas associated with 'traditional' research within the modernist paradigm. If informants come to a project with this notion colouring their expectations and responses, then misunderstandings can arise ... Clarity is, therefore, of the essence.

3.8.1   Lesson 1: Recruit research participants in the safety of the classroom

Johnny's anxiety before the first interview was, it transpired, compounded by several past experiences, one in which Johnny's identity was not protected as it should have been, and others in which tasks involving literacy had been sprung on him. In the main project, I decided that the first meeting with potential participants would take place in the classroom when learners would be informed of the project and invited to participate. Adults therefore heard information directly from me, the researcher who would be interviewing them, and were able to make an informed decision about whether they would feel comfortable taking part. Where adults expressed an interest in participating, further contact was made by telephone before an interview took place to provide the 'clarity' discussed by Goodson (2001, p.17). It is my belief that the steps outlined here alleviated any concerns or nerves that adults may otherwise have experienced prior to the first interview.

3.8.2   Lesson 2: Ensure participants can member-check their life history data

With Johnny, the arrangement had initially been to meet on two occasions for an hour each time. Partly as a result of Johnny's concerns, approximately twenty minutes of the first meeting was spent discussing the project, ethical issues, undertaking the consent procedure and generally reassuring the participant of the project's ethical guarantees, such as his right to withdraw at any time. Atkinson's (1998) words were offered as reassurance, and were extremely useful in redressing the imbalance of power which Johnny had previously

experienced: 'No one owns what isn't theirs' and life stories are 'owned by the persons whose stories they are' (p.37). Life history methodology does not, however, lend itself to the restrictive time constraints of one-hour interviews and Atkinson (1998) explains that, although there are sometimes 'restrictive circumstances that prevail and can limit an interview to an hour or less' this is 'far from ideal' (p.24):

> I have had to conduct a few life story interviews under such conditions when the interviewee was away from home and had other obligations at the time. I had to revise my usual approach and carry out the interview looking primarily for the essence, or highlights, of the person's life, still trying to have him or her include something from each stage of life. In this case, what can be done to get a more in-depth life story is to transcribe the interview and send it to the person to see if anything needs to be added to it.
>
> (Atkinson, 1998, p.24)

Although Johnny did not read, it was considered important that he have the opportunity to review the interview and request that changes or omissions be made, should he wish. This was discussed with him while his tutor was present in the first few stages of interview one and, because Johnny was learning to use a new laptop with his tutor's help, he asked for audio copies of each interview to be forwarded to him on disc. Following the transcription of both interviews, however, neither had been checked by the participant for accuracy or suggested editing. Although it was not anticipated that this would be a concern in the main project, it did remain a limitation of this pilot study. In the main project, transcripts were forwarded to participants for member checking.

3.8.3   Lesson 3: Give careful consideration to the duration of the life history interviews

Following the pilot study, I felt it important to carefully consider the issue of interview duration when planning the main project. As the initial interview addresses the project introduction and issues around ethics and consent, it was thought that ninety minutes may be a more realistic arrangement for the first meeting. Even this, however, may restrict the stories which emerge and, for this reason, subsequent meetings could be scheduled for two hours. Along with participants' own time commitments, however, this would also require consideration in relation to the project workload, for example transcribing. An alternative, as Atkinson (1998) suggests, is to have 'at least two or three interviews with the person, of an hour to an hour and a half' (p.24):

> Even this may be considered a brief life story interview, but it is quite a bit longer than the one-time interview, and much can be learned about the person's life in a two-part or three-part interview that extends over 3 hours.
>
> (Atkinson, 1998, p.p.24-25)

Before deciding upon a time-scale for the interviews, Miller (2000) points out that 'for both ethical and practical reasons' you must 'give a reasonable estimate to a potential respondent of the time you anticipate the interviewing will take' and 'should not deliberately mislead a potential respondent about the amount of time they may have to give for an interview' (p.81). As a result of this pilot study, the duration of the main project's interviews was given careful consideration, and I return to this in the following chapter.

3.8.4 Lesson 4: Be clear about the interview process

It was known from the initial stages of planning this pilot study that Johnny considered himself to be a non-reader and non-writer. Although working at Entry Level 3 for Speaking and Listening, he was currently working at Entry Level 1 for both the Writing and Reading elements of the *Adult Literacy Core Curriculum* (Read-Write-Plus, 2001). Considerations around this were addressed in the planning of the interviews and a consent form was devised in which statements, printed on strips, could be read to Johnny, requiring him only to initial the reverse of each strip. Paperwork was still visible throughout the interview, however, because, for instance, an interview protocol was developed and used to provide some interviewer guidance in an otherwise unstructured interview. For reasons, some of which are outlined above, the presence of pieces of paper was off-putting and even alarming to Johnny:

> Paperwork frightens me to death. I've just got it in my head that any minute you're going to turn around and say, 'Here you are, fill that in'.
>
> (Interview 1 transcript, p.1)

This experience highlighted the importance of making such issues clear from the outset and, again, reinforced the need for contact between participant and researcher prior to the first interview. As I decided to recruit participants to the main project who were working between Entry Level 3 and Level 2 of the *Adult Literacy Core Curriculum* (Read-Write-Plus, 2001), however, it was not envisaged that this would be an issue in future interviews.

3.8.5 Lesson 5: Give careful consideration to the importance of rapport between participant and researcher in life history interviews

The pilot interviews aimed to facilitate an informal dialogue in which the adult learner was able to reflect on experiences as he wished. This approach, in which 'a one-to-one interview-conversation' takes place 'between informant and researcher' is a common approach to life history interviewing and is referred to by Goodson (2001) as a 'grounded conversation' (p.p.27-28). To achieve this, Atkinson (1998) suggests allowing 'the person to hold the floor without interruption for as long as he or she can or wants to on a given topic or period in his or her life' as this can 'lead to more of a free association of thoughts and therefore, deeper responses' (p.31). Cue cards, discussed in the following paragraph, were used only where necessary to prompt reflection and discussion but, otherwise, Johnny was able to steer the conversation in any direction he wished to. It proved extremely difficult, however, to refrain from responding to Johnny's stories, and therefore interrupting his narrative. On reflection, this was in part due, as the transcript of interview 1 illustrates, to Johnny's need for a response, perhaps as confirmation that I was interested in what he had to say. It also appeared to be important in the first interview that the conversation was, at least for the first few minutes, a *conversation* and therefore a two-way exchange as this assisted in building trust and establishing rapport between participant and interviewer. Atkinson (1998) explains that the key to establishing rapport 'is to be able to find your own balance between guiding and following and knowing when it is more important to let the pace and direction of the process be set by the person you are interviewing' (p.28). This would, of course, differ for each participant, but the experience of this pilot study was useful in bringing this issue to my attention and highlighting its importance.

3.8.6   Lesson 6: Be clear when introducing participants to multimodal interview tasks

As discussed earlier in this chapter, it was my intention, in the main study, to provide participants with activities that they could undertake in advance of the life history interviews and the pilot study was therefore an opportunity to trial the use of certain activities. One of the activities involved the use of cue cards which contained an array of questions ranging from 'What is your favourite view?' and 'What was the highlight of your last 12 months?' to 'Describe yourself in three words' and 'What do you wish you had known 10 years ago?' These cue cards, piloted in the first interview with Johnny, were useful in getting him to talk about himself and reflect on the past. As the aim of the first interview was to gain initial biographical information about the participant and begin to explore some areas of his past, the first card selected was *How do you relax?* This led to a discussion about many aspects of Johnny's life which lasted for a significant part of the interview. Aside from a few cue cards, little other structure was placed on the interview, which proved to be important. The question *'What was the highlight of the last 12 months?'*, for example, led to an unexpected discussion about Johnny's children and grandchildren, supporting Goodson's (2001) following point:

> ...it may be that events, experiences or personal characteristics, which the researcher expects to have been important, are not seen in the same way by the informant. Too tight a structure and schedule, and relevant information may be lost or, alternatively, may be given disproportionate emphasis by the researcher. 'On one level, perhaps, life historians have to accept that people tell the story that they, for whatever reason, want to tell to the person who is listening' (Sikes *et al.* 1996: 51).

(Goodson, 2001, p.28)

It was intended that, in interview 2, an active interview approach would be piloted in which objects brought along by Johnny would form the focus of discussion. When this was suggested towards the end of interview 1 (interview 1 transcript, p.p.12-13), Johnny indicated that he did not like the idea. This in part appeared to be due to the lack of guidance around what the objects could be and, although some personal examples were offered, I avoided making too many suggestions for fear of significantly influencing his choices. Johnny did not bring any objects to the second meeting and the cards were occasionally used instead, where needed, though this was only a couple of times. I decided to pursue the use of personal objects to structure interviews in the main study, but consideration was given to how this was suggested to participants and how much guidance was offered about what the objects may be.

3.8.7   Lesson 7: Give careful consideration to the amount of time between interviews

My final reflection on the pilot study relates to the amount of time between the two interviews. On one hand, the one-week gap was extremely useful as the participant-researcher relationship that was established in the first meeting still existed by the following week, whereas a longer duration of time may result in this being affected. A drawback, however, was that it left little time from an interviewer perspective to be prepared for the following interview. It would have been beneficial, for instance, to have transcribed and reflected on the interview 1 transcript, but this was not possible. In the main project, it was therefore ensured that there be sufficient preparation time between meetings, while ensuring the participant-researcher relationship that is established be maintained. In the main study,

contact between interviews included the posting of interview transcripts for member checks, phone calls, emails and text messaging.

3.9   Chapter summary

This chapter has focused on the importance of trust, an often overlooked factor, in facilitating 'stability, co-operation and cohesion' (Troman, 2000, p.335) between all members of the research process. It has outlined how the Learning and Skills sector has been 'in a constant process of organisational change' since 2001 (p.115) and why, as a result of the many policy-led changes, it was considered throughout this research to be a low-trust environment. An understanding and acknowledgement of the many issues faced by those working in LLN was considered essential in developing relationships with those working in Skills for Life and, in turn, gaining access to their adult learners. This chapter has mapped the process in which I consulted with those working in the sector and carried out a pilot study, and the ways in which these experiences informed the research methodology. The following chapter will now detail how the lessons learned in these early stages of the research informed the design of the main study.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Research Design

4.1   Introduction

The previous chapter has provided a detailed discussion of the pilot study and consultation process, along with how the lessons learned from these informed the research design. This chapter now focuses on the design and methodology of the main study and is divided into two sections: part one outlines the three stages of data collection in the study; and part two details the sampling decisions which informed the research design.

4.2   Part One: Data Collection

Data collection in this project can be categorized into three phases: carrying out life history interviews with adult learners; collecting the ILP paperwork; and conducting tutor interviews. Extensive planning and consideration went into each of these stages, and are discussed in detail in the following pages.

4.2.1   Life history research methodology: the biographical turn

Recent decades have seen biographical research approaches 'become increasingly attractive to social scientists as they attempt to account both for individual actions and for social and cultural changes' (Chamberlayne, Bornat and Wengraf, 2000, p.i). Indeed, Chamberlayne et

al (2000) use the phrase ''the turn to biographical methods'' in their book title as 'a statement about the scope and influence of a shift in thinking which is currently shaping the agenda of research and its applications across the social science disciplines' (p.1):

> This shift, which amounts to a paradigm change (Kuhn 1960) or a change of knowledge culture (Somers 1996), affects not only the orientations of a range of disciplines, but their interrelations with each other. In general it may be characterised as a 'subjective' or 'cultural' turn in which personal and social meanings, as bases of action, gain greater prominence.
>
> (Chamberlayne, Bornat and Wengraf, 2000, p.1)

Miller (2000) describes the increasing focus on life experiences and biographies in research as a 'quiet revolution in social science practice' (p.1). Biographical methodology is assigned a number of terms including 'the life history or life story approach, life course research, the (auto)biographical perspective or the narrative approach' (Miller, 2000, p.1). Throughout this thesis, the terms 'life history', 'life story' and 'biographical methodology' are used interchangeably. To construct adult learners' biographical narratives, a representation rooted in their everyday lives as opposed to the ruling relations (Smith, 2005), life history methodology is selected because:

> As an approach, or method, for understanding individual lives and really connecting with another's experience, there may be no equal to the life story interview ... People telling their own stories reveal more about their own inner lives than any other approach could. Historical reconstruction may not be the primary concern in a life story; what is, is how people see themselves at this point

in their lives and want others to see them. A life story offers a vast array of the human qualities and characteristics that make us all so fascinating *and* fun to listen to.

<div align="right">(Atkinson, 1998, p.24)</div>

Goodson (2001) warns that 'one of the things that 'unsuccessful research starts with ... [is] Method or technique' because 'Research which is 'method-led' can be uneconomical, inappropriate and unjustifiably biased' (p.p.20-21). While it is a popular and interesting methodology, it is important to stress that a biographical approach is adopted in this study because 'it is the most appropriate one' and 'the one most likely to produce data which address, answer or otherwise meet and fulfil the questions, aims and purposes' of this study (Goodson, 2001, p.20). Here is a reminder of the research questions, introduced in Chapter 1, which specifically relate to participants' biographical narratives:

7. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do the adults construct for themselves?

8. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within the biographical narrative?

The biographical approach has therefore been adopted in this study because it is relevant for exploring 'how people make sense of their experiences and of the world around them' (Goodson, 2001, p.20). Life history methodology is considered a powerful research tool for a number of reasons. First, life stories are important to people's identities because, as Atkinson (1998) explains, 'Storytelling is a fundamental form of human communication. It can serve

an essential function in our lives. We often think in story form, speak in story form, and bring meaning to our lives through story' (p.1). Similarly, McAdams, Josselson and Lieblich (2006) state that 'We are all storytellers, and we are the stories we tell ... our narrative identities are the stories we live by' (p.p.3-4). As this quote illustrates, stories can be considered as fundamental to adults' lives and, importantly, to people's sense of who they are. In addressing questions about identity, such as 'Who am I?' and 'How do I fit into the adult world?', McAdams et al (2006) suggest that 'the construction of a self-defining *life story*' is important (p.4). Similarly, Johnstone (2001) explains that 'The essence of humanness, long characterized as the tendency to make sense of the world through rationality, has come increasingly to be described as the tendency to tell stories, to make sense of the world through narrative' (p.635). Having chosen biographical methodology as the most appropriate for this aspect of the study, the following pages detail the care taken in implementing this methodological approach.

4.2.2 Generalisability, reliability and validity in biographical research: a postmodern ontological approach

Each of the two narrative representations of focus in this study are approached as constructs, with neither considered truer than the other. Denzin (1989) argues that, within a biography, 'There is no "real" person behind the text, except as he or she exists in another system of discourse ... to argue for a factually correct picture of a "real" person is to ignore how persons are created in texts and other systems of discourse' (p.p.22-23). Denzin (1989) explains how autobiographical statements are 'viewed as a mixture of fiction and nonfiction, for each text

contains certain unique truths or verisimilitudes about life and particular lived experiences'
(p.24):

> ... the real, self-referential self is only present in a series of discourses about who
> a person is or was in the past. As Elbaz (1987, p.12) observes, "The
> autobiographer always writes a novel, a fiction, about a third person," this third
> person being who he or she was yesterday, last year, or one hour ago.
> Autobiography and biography present fictions about "thought" selves, "thought"
> experiences, events and their meanings. Such works are tormented by the
> problem of getting this person into the text, of bringing them alive and making
> them believable ... Elbaz (1987, p.1) argues, and I agree, "autobiography is fiction
> and fiction is autobiography: *both are narrative arrangements of reality*"
>
> (Denzin, 1989, p.24, italics in original)

Narrative research of any kind can be understood as 'a meaning-making endeavour with multiple truths' (Josselson and Lieblich, 1999, p.xi), raising questions about how appropriate generalisability, reliability and validity criteria are for such a study. Cohler and Hammack (2006) explain that 'Social and historical circumstances provide the fabric through which life stories are woven' meaning that 'personal narrative is grounded not only in remembered personal experience' but also 'uniquely constructed in a particular time and place, a cultural and historical context that allows for particular identity and possibilities' (p.151). Documenting the rise in popularity of biography in social science, Chamberlayne et al (2000) explain that, in both history and sociology, 'the status of personal accounts, unless drawn from more powerful actors in the case of history, raised questions of reliability, subjectivity and representativeness. Where historians elevated the document and its provenance as

reliable evidence, sociologists sought evidence in quantitative measures of social events'
(p.3). It can be argued that the concepts of reliability and validity 'rely on measurable and
objectivist assumptions that are largely irrelevant to narrative studies' since a personal
narrative 'is not meant to be read as an exact record of what happened, nor is it a mirror of
the world' (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.89). It is useful, however, to consider reliability in
narrative research as referring 'to the dependability of data', and validity as addressing 'the
strength of the analysis of data, the trustworthiness of the data and ease of access to that data'
(Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.89). The sharing of interview transcripts with participants,
along with the final narrative, reinforces both the reliability and validity of the biographical
narratives constructed in this project. Stewart (1997) explains:

> Connelly and Clandinin [1990, 7] question the appropriateness of criteria such as
> reliability, validity and generalisability for qualitative methods generally. They
> contend that narrative explanation is holistic and not dependent on cause and
> effect ... they present the notion that narratology 'may be read and lived
> vicariously by others' [1990, 8], and argue that plausibility and adequacy are
> factors determining whether a story rings true. Spence [1982] speaks of
> 'narrative truth' made up of consistency, conviction, aesthetic finality and
> closure. Consequently, a sense of 'authenticity' [Rosen 1988] is created through
> the ability of the reader to recognise and empathise with the events of the
> narrative. In this sense, stories function as arguments in which something
> essentially human is learned through understanding, through the story, the actual
> life or community events.
>
> (Stewart, 1997, p.226)

When considering narrative 'authenticity' (Rosen, 1988) as an alternative to the criteria of generalisability, reliability and validity, it is useful to turn to the work of Labov (1972) who identifies elements and functions within oral narratives, as follows:

Elements of oral narratives	Function	Example
Abstract	Announcement that speaker has a story to tell, and brief summary	'three weeks ago I had a fight with this other dude outside'
Orientation	Introduction of characters, time, place and situation	'I was sitting on the corning and shit, smoking my cigarette, you know'
Complicating action	Narration of core sequence of events	'I put that cigarette down, and [...] I beat the shit out of that motherfucker'
Evaluation	Indications of the point of the story, why it is worth telling and listening to	'But it was quite an experience', 'I was shaking like a leaf'
Result or resolution	Indication of what finally happened	'After all that I gave the dude a cigarette, after all that'
Coda	Indication that the story is over and connection with the ongoing talk	'And that was that'

Table 4.1 (Labov, 1972)

As illustrated by Labov (1972), a narrator adheres to complex rules when telling a life story. Labov (2006) explains that a narrative is defined 'as one way of recounting past events, in which the order of narrative clauses matches the order of events as they occurred' (p.2). Alternatively, the same events can be 'reported in the non-narrative order' by employing 'a variety of grammatical devices within a single clause' (Labov, 2006, p.2). Regardless of a narrative's order, Labov (2006) explains that these '*narrative clauses* ... respond to a potential question, "what happened then?" and form the *complicating action* of the narrative' (p.2, italics in original). Of the six elements of oral narratives identified above (Labov, 1972), the complicating action, with its narration of core sequence of events, is the fundamental element of a narrative. The 'evaluation' element of an oral narrative, in which a story is shown to be 'worth telling' (Labov, 1972), highlights the importance of 'tellability' within a narrative. To demonstrate its worth, a narrative will contain an evaluation, or strong evaluative element and Labov (2006) explains that tellability 'is relative to the situation and the relations of the narrator with the audience' (p.5). Labov (2006) points out that, although within narratives, some events are considered to be the '*most reportable* ... For a narrative to be successful, it cannot report only the most reportable event' (p.5). As indicated by Labov's (1971; 2006) work, criteria are inherent within narratives which offer alternatives to the concepts of generalisability, reliability and validity in testing the quality of narrative data.

Similarly, Pals (2006) explains that the 'idea that the construction of causal connections constitutes a fundamental process of self-making is rooted in the basic idea that coherence is an essential quality of an identity-defining life story' (p.176). Along with 'structural properties of narration', Pals (2006) highlights the importance of 'explanations of causality and the evaluative significance or meaning of events for the narrator' within a life story (p.177):

Causal connections integrate these different aspects of coherence in that the narrator interprets a past experience as having a causal impact that endures over time and contains self-defining significance or meaning in his or her life. Thus, the narrative act of constructing causal connections may be thought of as an interpretive strategy for creating coherence within the life story.

(Pals, 2006, p.177)

Pals (2006) explains that there has been a shift in perspective regarding narrative coherence 'away from the idea that coherence is a static characteristic that the life story as a whole does or does not possess' and 'toward the idea that it is something we continually try to do as we construct our life stories' (p.177). Pals (2006) believes this 'shift in perspective' to have two strengths:

First, it embraces the idea that the life story is a process: It is not a contained, complete entity but rather a dynamic, ever-changing construction that is constantly subject to revision as we encounter new experiences in our lives ... Second, it is valuable to conceptualize coherence in terms of interpretive acts of self-making, as opposed to a static characteristic of the life story as a whole because it does not require coherence to take the shape of a singular, linearly ordered story line.

(Pals, 2006, p.p.177-178)

Narrative identities, as Elliott (2005) explains, 'should not be understood as free fictions' but instead 'as the product of an interaction between the cultural discourses which frame and provide structure for the narrative, and the material circumstances and experiences of each individual ... In other words, while each person has the capacity to produce a narrative about themselves that is creative and original, this narrative will take as its template existing narratives which each individual has learned and internalized' (p.127).

This study approaches adults' life histories and stories provided in interview from the standpoint that 'the only available social reality' is 'the one that is ongoing at that time': the interplay between interviewee and interviewer (Miller, 2000, p.14):

> The narrative approach can be labelled 'postmodern', in that reality is seen to be situational and fluid – jointly constructed by the interview partnership during the conduct of the interview ... In 'normal' life actors generate their ongoing perceptions of their social environments through interaction with others and with their structural contexts – and the interview situation is seen as no more than a special instance of the general.
>
> (Miller, 2000, p.p.13-14)

This 'interplay between interviewee and interviewer' (Miller, 2000, p.14) is reinforced in this research in the way in which the life history interview data is used to construct participants' biographical narratives. Life stories, for example, usually begin 'as a recorded interview' which focuses on 'one person's entire life', 'is transcribed, and ends up as a flowing narrative, completely in the words of the person telling the story' (Atkinson, 1998, p.3). Chapter 6 will detail how, in this study, life history methodology is combined with

neonarrative methodology (Stewart 1997; 2008) to construct each participant's biographical narrative in a way that openly acknowledges the co-constructed nature of narratives and, indeed, empirical data in general.

It was never an intention of this study to follow a prescribed narrative research methodology because, as Josselson and Lieblich (1999) warn, the quest for such a thing may itself be 'an outgrowth of a positivistic paradigm that is fundamentally at odds with a hermeneutic approach' (p.ix):

> As narrative-based qualitative research attracts more practitioners, the wish to standardize and regulate grows. The wish is for modes of investigation parallel, say, to multiple regression designs or factor analysis. Or for clear criteria of "reliability". In general, the natural wish of students and beginning scholars is for a cookbook of some kind, a manual that will outline stages or steps in conducting a good narrative study – something that will guarantee success if you follow all the rules.
>
> (Josselson and Lieblich, 1999, p.ix)

Instead, this study approaches 'narrative research as a hermeneutic mode of inquiry, where the process of inquiry flows from the question – which is a question about a person's inner, subjective reality and, in particular, how a person makes meaning of some aspect of his or her experience' (Josselson and Lieblich, 1999, p.p.ix-x). In narrative research, 'individual motivations and social influences have no easy demarcation' but, in biographical studies, this 'is seen less as a methodological hindrance than a way of observing in the exploration of the *narrative* features of human identity, how the structural and interactional are intertwined'

(Erben, 1998, p.1). As Denzin (1989) suggests, 'A preoccupation with method, with the validity, reliability, generalisability, and theoretical relevance of the biographical method ... must be set aside in favour of a concern for meaning and interpretation' (p.25).

4.2.3   Ethical considerations in biographical research

Ethical considerations are fundamental to any empirical study and, as a result of the personal nature of the data, this is particularly true of biographical research. Ethical concerns have informed many decisions made throughout the planning and conducting of the study. In the first interview, for example, project aims and ethical considerations were discussed and participants were encouraged to ask any questions they had. Along with asking for consent to use audio recording equipment, the Consent Form (see Appendix 4) outlines several other important aspects which required participants' consent. At this stage, for example, it was important to be 'clear about who [was] going to listen to tape recordings, have access to interview transcripts and other types of data' along with explaining how the participant's identity will be disguised or anonymized (Goodson, 2001, p.27). As Goodson (2001) advocates, all project participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms (p.27).

Atkinson (1998) explains that 'No one owns what isn't theirs', and, importantly, life stories are 'clearly owned by the persons whose stories they are' (p.37). This was stressed to participants throughout the study, along with their right to withdraw from the study at any time, even 'once the research [had] begun' (Cohen et al, 2007, p.64). The ethics of doing a 'life story interview are all about being fair, honest, clear, and straightforward. It is a

relationship founded on a moral responsibility, primarily because of the gift you are being entrusted with' (Atkinson, 1998, p.36). Throughout this study, personal life stories were indeed considered to be a 'gift' (Atkinson, 1998), and participants and their narratives were treated in accordance with this ethos. The importance of ethics in biographical research is further emphasised by Atkinson (1998) who explains that when we tell a story from our own life:

> we increase our working knowledge of ourselves because we discover deeper meaning in our lives through the process of reflecting and putting the events, experiences, and feelings that we have lived into oral expression.
>
> (Atkinson, 1998, p.1)

While life history research is seen as an approach to investigating issues of identity, an important ethical consideration throughout this project has been the potential *effects* that participation may have on participants' identities:

> The act of constructing the narrative of a life could very well be the means by which that life comes together for the first time, or flows smoothly from one thing to the next, to be seen as a meaningful whole. For some people, telling one's story can be a way of becoming who one really is. It can be a way of owning once and for all the values and attitudes that have been acquired over a lifetime from family or elsewhere. Telling a life story the way one sees it can be one of the most emphatic answers to the question, "Who am I?"
>
> (Atkinson, 1998, p.12)

An important consideration from an early stage of this study has therefore been to consider the safety of the participants taking part in this project. While participation in this study may empower adults 'by guiding them to a deeper understanding of their own lives' (Atkinson, 1998, p.22), it is also possible that it may be an emotional experience for them. It was crucial when designing the life history interviews to ensure that participants would not feel obliged to answer questions or to reflect on life experiences which they may not wish to. The interview design therefore aimed to facilitate an informal dialogue in which the adult learner could reflect on experiences as s/he wishes. This approach, in which 'a one-to-one interview-conversation' takes place 'between informant and researcher' is a common approach to life history interviewing and is referred to by Goodson (2001) as a 'grounded conversation''(p.p.27-28). To achieve this, Atkinson (1998) suggests allowing 'the person to hold the floor without interruption for as long as he or she can or wants to on a given topic or period in his or her life' as this can 'lead to more of a free association of thoughts and therefore, deeper responses' (p.31). One consideration regarding this approach, however, is finding a way to do this while also retaining a focus on the research aims and questions. For this, Cresswell (2003) advocates using 'an *interview protocol*' to include:

> a heading, instructions to the interviewer (opening statements), the key research questions, probes to follow key questions, transition messages for the interviewer, space for recording the interviewer's comments, and a space in which the researcher records reflective notes.

> (Cresswell, 2003, p.190)

An interview protocol was therefore devised containing prompts for both beginning and ending the interview, along with a reminder of the research questions and space to record

notes (see Appendix 5). A more structured approach to the interviews was considered inappropriate because, as Josselson and Lieblich (1999) warn, 'Narrative research is a process of inquiry that embraces paradox and cannot therefore be defined in linear terms' (p.xi). The protocol enabled the use of open-ended interviews while also 'having specific questions ready to ask' if needed (Atkinson, 1998, p.31). It is important to stress, however, that the use of unstructured and semi-structured interviews does not negate the need to plan carefully in advance of such meetings. Wengraf (2001), for example, focuses on semi-structured interviews in which, as in this project, interviewees are asked to 'tell a story' and 'produce a narrative of some sort regarding all or part of their own life-experience' (p.5). An important point in relation to the planning of this project's interviews can be found in Wengraf's (2001) warning against viewing such interviews as the 'easier' option:

> Novice researchers often feel that, with interviews that are only semi-structured, they do not have to do as much preparation, they do not have to work each question out in advance. This is a *terrible* mistake. Semi-structured interviews are not 'easier' to prepare and implement than fully structured interviews; they might be seen as more difficult. They are *semi*-structured, but they must be *fully* planned and prepared.
>
> (Wengraf, 2001, p.5, italics in original)

As Wengraf (2001) suggests, rather than reduce the need for planning, the openness of the life history interview approach in this study requires thorough planning ahead of each meeting. In a life history interview, for example, 'a researcher can never know for certain which experiences have been influential and relevant in a particular sphere of life' and, conversely, 'it may be that events, experiences or personal characteristics, which the

researcher expects to have been important, are not seen in the same way by the informant' (Goodson, 2001, p.28). In addition, when life stories are understood as a gift with which I am being entrusted (Atkinson, 1998, p.36), I felt it important to demonstrate, by remembering them, that their stories are important. Ahead of each life history interview, I therefore often spent several hours re-reading the previous interview transcripts, making notes and reminding myself of particular aspects of the participant's life stories told so far.

Although the life history interviews were 'relatively unstructured, informal, conversation-type encounters' (Goodson, 2001, p.28), it was considered important to provide some structure to them and the pilot study provided the opportunity to trial the use of certain activities which could assist in this (see Chapter 3). Although interview appears to be an obvious qualitative choice, Light (2006) explains that it can also have many downfalls and proposes asking interviewees to complete a task at the same time as providing a verbal account. Rather than completing a task in the interview itself, an active interview approach was adopted in which participants were asked to complete a task in advance of each interview and to bring their preparations along to the meeting. The following pages outline the design of the four life history interviews carried out with adult literacy learners in this study.

4.2.4   Designing the life history interviews

The design of the four life history interviews has been informed by the lessons learned in the pilot study (see Chapter 3) and the considerations detailed in the previous pages of this chapter. Life documents can include autobiographies, biographies, diaries, letters, obituaries, life histories, personal experience stories, oral histories, and personal histories (Denzin, 1989,

p.7). The table below provides an overview of the four life history interviews illustrating how they feature a number of these:

Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
More structure ⟵⟶ **Less structure**			
Less focus on literacy ⟵⟶ **More focus on literacy**			
Introduce project	Post preparation in advance: to produce an autobiographical mind-map (only notes and key words needed)	Post preparation in advance: to develop mind-map into piece of writing	Post preparation in advance: to bring some photographs and possessions to final meeting.
Discuss any queries or concerns		(NB: incorporate some prompts around critical events into this activity)	
Cover ethical aspects			
Complete consent documentation	(NB: This is likely to include literacy learning experiences but won't be dominated by them)		Encourage adults to bring things that represent different aspects or chapters in their lives (as identified in earlier meetings)
Agree interview timetable		Interview to focus on the above: discuss what they wrote about, why, how felt when writing it, what is most important in it and why, elaborate on the story's context, etc	
Use protocol and cue cards to gain some biographical info and explore areas	Activity will form focus of this interview. Ask participants to discuss their mind-map and notes.		Interview to focus on the stories that participants wish to tell about these items.
Discuss arrangements for transcripts		Introduce the literacy programme into the discussion	Also discuss the ILP
Close by reiterating ethics	NB: do not provide a proforma, though people may need an example.		Ask for permission to take copies or photographs to include in the personal narrative
Provide researcher			

contact details			that is constructed (ethics permitting).

In addition to the lessons from the pilot study and the importance of ethical considerations highlighted in methodological literature, the design of the four life history interviews in this study has been informed by empirical research in the field of adult literacy. '[F]ollowing the work of Kuhn (1970)', Wengraf (2001) argues that 'all social research work and production is largely determined by the norms and exemplars of professional practice characteristic of the research community to which the researcher belongs or wishes to belong. Consequently, to know what your research community wishes to see, you need to study examples of 'very good, very recognized practice' within your discipline' (p.14).

One key project in the field of literacy studies that this study draws on in its life history interview design is presented in *Local Literacies* (Barton and Hamilton, 2012) which 'introduces us to specific people who think about and talk about what they do with reading and writing, how it is, and how it is bound up with all they do' (Bloome, 1997, p.xiv). Unlike Barton and Hamilton's (2012) work, this project is not 'a study of what people do with literacy: of the social activities, of the thoughts and meanings behind the activities, and of the texts utilised in such activities' (p.3). Like the study presented in *Local Literacies* (Barton and Hamilton, 2012), however, the aim of the interviews is to 'focus on the particular', as opposed to 'what is universal' (Bloome, 1997, p.xiv); to focus on individual participants' identities and the meanings that they assign to the literacy programme. The *Local Literacies* study (Barton and Hamilton, 2012) uses a variety of artefacts in interviews, including: maps to plot where people 'went on a regular or occasional basis' (p.65), 'letters from school' and 'junk mail' (p.65), and diaries of literacy practices (p.65). Similarly, when researching

college students' literacy practices in different areas of their everyday lives, Ivanič et al's (2009) methodology utilises: pen-portraits 'detailing who the student was, and why he/she had been chosen to participate in the project', 'clock faces to elicit representations of what they did in the course of a day or part of the day', 'a record of the reading and writing involved in a week of their life' including 'photographs on a disposable camera and a collection of (some of) the texts involved', 'an icon-mapping activity where students organised icons representing different kinds of reading and writing into different areas of their lives', and a semi-structured interview 'based around [these] previous activities and artefacts' (p.p.194-195). There are therefore several methodological aspects from both *Local Literacies* (Barton and Hamilton, 2012) and *Improving Learning in* College (Ivanič et al, 2009) that inform this project's life history interview methodology. This project adopts, for instance, a multi-modal interview approach, incorporating the use of a variety of activities and artefacts to offer participants a number of ways to organise their life stories. In particular, just as Ivanič et al (2009) ask students to record 'the reading and writing involved in a week of their life' (p.p.194-195), this project's second interview incorporates an activity in which adults are asked to produce an auto-biographical mind-map ahead of the meeting. This then forms the focus of the second interview and importantly, because of the chosen format, a chronological order is not imposed on participants' notes. In addition, although the mind-map may contain direct or indirect references to the literacy programme, literacy is not the focus of the task and will therefore not dominate the second interview. As in both *Local Literacies* (Barton and Hamilton, 2012) and *Improving Learning in College* (Ivanič et al, 2009), autobiographical writing, along with personal photographs and other possessions, is also used to structure the interviews. Preparation in advance of interview 3, for instance, requires participants to develop their mind-map from the previous meeting into a piece of autobiographical writing. In the fourth and final interview, adults are asked to bring photos

and items that represent different aspects and chapters of their lives, with the interview focusing on the stories around these.

Webster and Mertova (2007) propose 'a critical event' approach to narrative inquiry (p.3), explaining that a 'critical event as told in a story reveals a change of understanding or worldview by the storyteller' (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.73):

> An event becomes critical in that it has some of the following characteristics. It has impacted on the performance of the storyteller in a professional or work-related role. It may have a traumatic component, attract some excessive interest by the public or media, or introduce risk in the form of personal exposure: illness, litigious action or other powerful personal consequence. However, what makes a critical event 'critical' is the impact it has on the storyteller (Bohl, 1995). It is almost always a change experience, and it can only ever be identified afterwards.
>
> (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.p.73-74)

As illustrated in the above table, participants in this study are asked to produce an autobiographical mind-map ahead of interview 2, which they are then encouraged to develop into a short piece of autobiographical writing before the third interview. By asking participants to develop their mind-map into a piece of autobiographical writing, a critical-event focus was therefore incorporated into the activity design.

4.2.5   Collecting the ILP paperwork

Following the end of participants' respective literacy courses, a copy of their ILP paperwork was received from their tutor. I looked at each participant's ILP ahead of the fourth life history interview. In this final meeting, as illustrated above, participants were invited to bring along and discuss personal items and the ILP was also discussed. Learners' gave their consent for me to have access to their ILP paperwork in the first interview (see Appendix 4 for the Consent Form). In addition, consent to have access to ILP paperwork was secured from the tutors and their managers at an early stage of the project, before I visited classrooms to invite learners to take part in the study. Chapter 6 details the analytical framework developed to analyse both the ILP and biographical narratives of focus in this study.

4.2.6   Carrying out tutor interviews

Interviews took place with each of the four tutors following the completion of all learner life history interviews. Tutors each gave their consent to the interview at an early stage of the project and, as with the life history interviews, important ethical considerations were discussed including the recording of conversations and issues of confidentiality. All four tutors chose a pseudonym by which they are known throughout this project and it was agreed not to identify the provider institution in the reporting of the project both to protect adult learners' identities and the identities of the tutors.

The main focus of the tutor interviews was the ILP paperwork and, in particular, the practices that take place in constructing and completing it.   An interview protocol was drawn up (see Appendix 6) containing five parts, as follows:

1. Ethics

2. Tutor background, role and department

3. ILP paperwork

4. Overview of literacy course and learner group

5. Participants / learners in the study

A copy of the interview protocol was emailed to each tutor in advance of the meeting. As with the adult learners' life history interviews, it was important to inform tutors of the interview plans: first for the ethical reason 'that they can decide on whether they *agree* to the topic'; and second 'so they can reflect on what they might say and prepare themselves' (Gillham, 2005, p.p.50-51, italics in original).

As with learners' life history interviews, tutors were assured that they would receive a full transcript of the interview shortly afterwards, which they could edit as they wished. This was particularly important considering the issues discussed previously in this thesis regarding audit culture (Chapter 2) and trust (Chapter 3), and resulted in them being more relaxed in the interview. I went to great lengths to stress to tutors that this study was not an audit of their paperwork and nor was it an assessment of their paperwork practices. To build trust and rapport, it was important to acknowledge tutors' concerns about this at an early stage. As discussed in Chapter 2, ILPs are 'something [that tutors] frequently talk and worry about, but [are] nevertheless surprised that anyone would want to research' (p.221).

4.3 Part Two: Research design and Participants

As a result of the uncertainties surrounding changes in provision at this time (see Chapter 3), sampling decisions for this study were not based on specific Adult Literacy qualifications or models of provision and I turned instead to distinctions being made within the funding documents at that time. At the time of designing this project, post-16 funding in education was moving from a five-stream to a three-steam model, to include: a 16-18 model; an Adult Learner Responsive model; and an Employer Responsive model (Linford, 2008, p.21). In relation to Adult Literacy and Numeracy provision at that time, 'the Learning and Skills Council [therefore had] two separate funding streams to meet adult demand, an adult responsive model covering mainstream FE programmes delivered through colleges and training providers and an employer responsive stream to meet demand in the workplace' (House of Commons, 2009, p.EV16). The distinction also seemed useful because, when conducting the telephone survey (see Chapter 3), many managers I spoke with identified their departments as either predominantly adult responsive or employer responsive. As detailed below, I therefore drew on the adult responsive (AR) / employer responsive (ER) distinction when designing this study. Employer Responsive courses often take place within the workplace, while learners are at work and in line with the requirements of the employer. Because such programmes are provided in negotiation with the employer, they are also more likely to be time-bound and structured. By contrast, Adult Responsive courses are not linked to a specific business or employer and, as a result, programmes tend to take place in a college or community setting, often following a roll on, roll off workshop format. The following diagram illustrates that, while the two use the same curriculum and accreditation, their characteristics are distinctly different:

College or community setting	Adult Responsive		Employer Responsive	Workplace setting
Self-referred				Employer referred
Roll on, roll off				Structured course

Figure 4.1: Adult Responsive and Employer Responsive Provision

Chapter 2 has discussed how the design and content of learners' ILPs can differ across different providers and classrooms and, as a result, I sought the participation of two adult literacy providers in the northwest of England. Within these two institutions, I sought the participation of two literacy tutors who could provide access to their learners, enabling me to invite their participation in the study. The following diagram provides an overview of the study's design and illustrates how the adult responsive / employer responsive distinction informed the final project design and sampling decisions:

Two institutional case studies	**Provider 1** *Predominantly ER Provision*		**Provider 2** *Predominantly AR provision*	
Two tutors working in each institution	**Tutor 1**	**Tutor 2**	**Tutor 3**	**Tutor 4**
Four learners enrolled in each tutor's classes	**4 learners** *enrolled on ER provision*	**4 learners** *enrolled on ER provision*	**4 learners** *enrolled on AR provision*	**4 learners** *enrolled on AR provision*
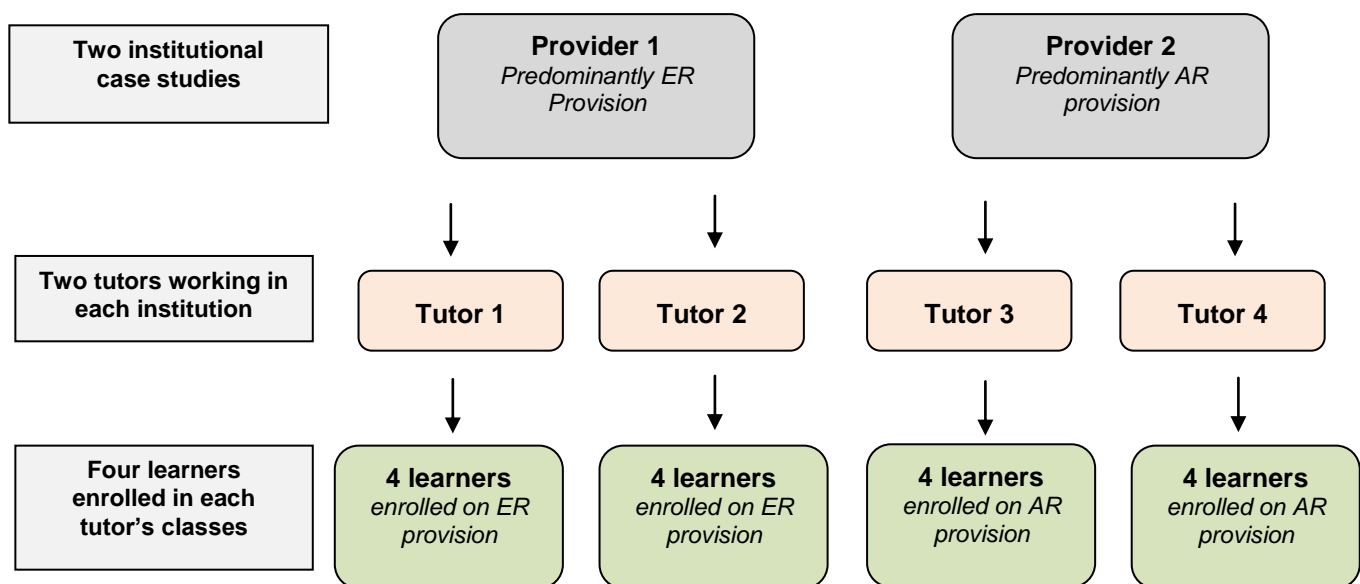
Figure 4.2: Overview of the study's design and sampling decisions

As discussed in Chapter 1, all adult learners enrolled on Skills for Life provision must now work towards the relevant recognised national qualification for their identified curriculum level, irrespective of provision type. These are: portfolio-based achievements for Milestone and Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3; and National Tests at Levels 1 and 2. Of these qualifications, Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2 achievements count towards the Skills for Life achievement targets, detailed in Chapter 1. The study therefore sought the participation of learners enrolled on Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2 provision. Beyond this, the recruitment of adult learners to this study was not informed by other sampling factors; as discussed in Chapter 3, gaining access to this sector is problematic and establishing trust with participants was considered more important than factors such as gender and age. The study therefore utilises both convenience sampling and snowball sampling in its design. Snowball sampling 'is useful for sampling a population where access is difficult' and involves identifying 'a small number of individuals' who are then able to 'put the researchers in touch with' other participants (Cohen et al, 2000, p.104). In relation to this study, then, tutors are 'the critical or key informants with whom initial contact must be made' (Cohen et al, 2000, p.104) and through which access to learners can be successfully achieved. The research also draws on an element of convenience sampling because, once access to learners was granted by the tutors, the selection of participants depended to a large extent upon the positive responses received from learners.

4.3.1   Recruiting the providers and tutors

As discussed in Chapter 3, a consequence of carrying out the telephone survey with Skills for Life managers was that this then provided me with opportunities to invite tutors to participate in the study. This often entailed forwarding an email invitation to the manager who then circulated it within the department, while in other organisations appointments were made for me to attend department meetings and present the research project to tutors. As a result of the stages outlined here, the participation of four Adult Literacy tutors working within two Skills for Life providers in the North West was secured at an early stage of the project. Meetings then took place with each of the tutors to discuss logistical details around inviting their learners to take part.

4.3.2   Overview of Provider 1

Provider 1 is a Lifelong Learning department within an FE college in the northwest of England. Two tutors in Provider 1, Eleanor and Sophie, took part in the project. Four project participants – Anne, Jalisa, Lexi and Michal – were recruited from the same Provider 1 classroom, a class taught by Eleanor. One project participant, Suzanne, was recruited from tutor Eleanor's classroom.

4.3.3 Overview of Provider 2

Provider 2 is a Lifelong Learning department within a local authority in the northwest of England. Two tutors in Provider 2, Christine and Penny, took part in the project. Three project participants – Alice, Emily and Molly – were recruited from the same Provider 2 classroom, a class taught by Christine. Four project participants were recruited from two of Penny's classrooms: Louise, Isla and Sandy, who were attending a Level 2 short literacy course; and Beth, who was attending a one-to-one session with Penny to work towards an Entry Level 3 qualification.

4.3.4 Recruiting learner-participants: the classroom visits

In the initial meeting with each tutor, we discussed ways to invite their learners to take part in the study. The tutors often had very strong feelings about which classes it would be appropriate to approach and, although we discussed this together, these decisions were made by each tutor based on their knowledge of the learners and learner groups. I provided each tutor with a handout - 'Invitation to take part in a research project' (see Appendix 7) – which they discussed with their chosen learner groups. Where learners expressed interest in hearing more about the project, tutors then invited me to visit those classrooms. This process was a time-consuming yet important one in ensuring that tutors felt empowered but also that learners did not feel forced into taking part in the study.

As a qualified and experience literacy tutor, I used the opportunity of visiting the classes to deliver a lesson about biographical writing. The lesson plan and resources were discussed with the tutor beforehand, with activities being differentiated for different groups and links being made to previous lessons. I began the lesson with a paired activity in which, after talking for a few minutes, learners introduced the other member in the pair. Learners were then provided with a blank mind-map to complete, along with an example of a completed one for guidance. Suggested themes for the mind-maps were provided, as follows:

- Home

- Work

- Learning

- Life history

Importantly, it was stressed that learners' completed mind-maps were not being collected in and nor did they have to share any aspect of it should they not wish to. Once completed, however, learners had the opportunity to share aspects of their mind-map in a whole-group activity and I took a turn first, having completed my own mind-map. Without exception, all learners took the opportunity to share information and stories about themselves and both learners and tutors often learned things about each other that they had not previously known. Following this, I provided learners with a couple of examples of autobiographical writing. These were taken from the Voices on the Page collection of student writing (NRDC, 2012) and were differentiated, both for content and readability, depending on the learner group. Once learners had read these examples and discussed them as a group, they were encouraged to begin their own piece of writing using their mind-map as a guide. This writing activity was often taken home to complete or revisited in another lesson. Before leaving the class, I asked all learners to complete a brief questionnaire (see Appendix 8). This captured

information about the members of the group regardless of their intention to take part in the project. The bottom of the form provided a space for people to record their name and contact details, to be completed only where they wished to take part in the project. Soon after visiting the class, I contacted learners who had volunteered to take part and arranged the first interview. A total of twelve adult learners participated in the study. Please see Appendix 9 for copies of the resources used to support the classroom visits.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has consisted of two parts. Part one has focused on the design and methodology of the research. Drawing on methodological literature, it has detailed the approach to biographical research adopted in this study and, in particular, ontological and ethical issues. The design of the four life history interviews has been presented, illustrating how this has been informed by empirical research in the field of adult literacy. Part one has also outlined how participants' ILPs were collected, along with detailing the undertaking of tutor interviews. Part two of the chapter has illustrated the sampling decisions made early in this study and the resulting final design of the research. This section has detailed the recruitment of two institutions and four tutors in the northwest of England along with how visits to the classroom and the resources used secured the participation of twelve adult literacy learners. The following chapter will now focus on the fieldwork stage of the study, which lasted approximately 18 months. Chapter 5 offers an account of the ways in which I engaged with participants and their data in the fieldwork stage of the project, and how these experiences came to inform subsequent analytical decisions.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis in the Fieldwork Stage

5.1   Introduction

The previous chapter has detailed how the participation of two institutions, four tutors and twelve adult learners was secured in this study. Along with the sampling decisions made, the previous chapter has focused on the design and methodology of the project, detailing the life history interviews with learners, the collection of learners' ILPs, and the tutor interviews. This chapter now focuses on the data analysis which took place in the fieldwork stage of the study, lasting approximately 18 months, while the following chapter, Chapter 7, will outline the post-fieldwork data analysis.

Data analysis is often considered to be a stand-alone stage and as separate from other aspects of the research process, but this study draws on the 'grounded theory approach' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to allow the 'formulation of an interpretation from the data up' (Knight, 2002, p.187).   The grounded theory approach of beginning with the data, rather than with preconceived ideas about them, is in line with Smith's (2005) 'institutional ethnography', a method of inquiry in which Smith (2005) states that 'The researcher does not know in advance where her or his investigation will go' (p.68). Like the ''established sociology'' in which Smith was trained, a traditional approach to research might be said to '[begin] from a standpoint in a text-mediated discourse or organization', '[operate] to claim a piece of the actual for the ruling relations of which it is part' and '[proceed] from a concept or theory expressing those relations' (Smith, 1999, p.4). By contrast, standpoint 'creates a point of entry into discovering the social that does not subordinate the knowing subject to objectified

forms of knowledge of society or political economy' (Smith, 2005, p.10). Through the use of grounded theory, a standpoint approach is adopted in this research, as opposed to attempting to predict outcomes or reading 'the data to test interpretations of findings' (Knight, 2002, p.187). This chapter provides an account of the ways in which I engaged with participants and their data in the fieldwork stage of the project, and how these experiences came to inform subsequent analytical decisions. The chapter therefore details how this approach informed the management of 'data analysis' and the development of 'an abstract theoretical framework that explains the studied process' (Charmaz, 2003, p.311). Importantly, this chapter illustrates how data analysis in this research did 'not come after data gathering' (Silverman, 2002, p.121), and how, instead, 'Grounded theory researchers collect data and analyze it simultaneously from the initial phases of research' (Charmaz, 2003, p.311).

5.2   Domains of Activity

In *Local Literacies*, Barton and Hamilton (2012) explain how 'Contemporary life can be analysed in a simple way into domains of activity' (p.9) and, following the two pilot interviews with Johnny, it became apparent that the life stories and experiences to which he referred could be categorised into specific 'identifiable domains' (Barton and Hamilton, 2012, p.10). Each story told by Johnny in interview can, for example, be categorised in relation to one of the following domains: Family; Home; Education; Workplace; and Healthcare. In the early stages of the study, the concept of domain of activity was seen first and foremost as a way of structuring participants' interview data into a coherent narrative. As will be illustrated in Chapter 6, the concept of domain of activity was therefore incorporated into the use of Neonarrative methodology (Stewart, 1997; 2008) and used as a

way of structuring participants' biographical narratives. In the fieldwork stage of the project, however, the concept of domain of activity also resulted in other important analytical decisions in this study.

Participants' stories were told and, very often, re-told to me over the course of the fieldwork stage. As outlined in Chapter 4, when recruiting learners to the study I visited classrooms and, through planned activities, encouraged people to share biographical information. It is therefore these meetings in the classroom, rather than the first interview, which represent the moments in which I first began to hear their stories. Perhaps unsurprisingly, over the many months that followed in which we met in person, arranged meetings by text message and telephone, and exchanged transcripts in the post, I came to know their stories well. Over time, the concept of domain of activity, which had at first seemed useful primarily as a way of coping with the interview data and of categorising the stories told into written narrative form, began to help me to think about the identities being narrated within participants' life stories. Domains, however, 'are not clear-cut' and 'there are questions of permeability of boundaries, of leakages and movement between boundaries, and of overlap between domains' (Barton and Hamilton, 2012, p.10). To assist my understanding of participants' narratives, I needed to look beyond domains to something more specific, and the concept of discourse community came to serve this purpose well.

5.3   Discourse Communities

Along with categorising participants' life stories by domain of activity, it became clear in the fieldwork stage that the experiences being narrated could be understood as representing

participation within discourse communities across different domains of activity. Barton and Hamilton (2012) explain that 'people participate in distinct discourse communities, in different domains of life', and they define discourse communities as 'groups of people held together by their characteristic ways of talking, acting, valuing, interpreting and using written language' (p.10). In his introduction to the theory of social capital, Field (2008) uses a similar concept, that of networks, when explaining that 'People's relationships matter greatly to them':

> People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks; to the extent that these networks constitute a resource, they may be seen as forming a kind of capital ... Membership of networks, and a set of shared values, are at the heart of the concept of social capital.
>
> (Field, 2008, pp.1-3)

Swales (1990) proposes 'six defining characteristics that will be necessary and sufficient for identifying a group of individuals as a discourse community' (p.24):

> *A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals ... mechanisms of intercommunication among its members ... uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback ... utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims ... has acquired some specific lexis ... [and] has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise.*
>
> (Swales, 1990, p.p.24-27, italics in original).

Along with 'discourse community' (Swales, 1990), there are a number of other ways in which such groups have been conceptualised, perhaps most notable of which is the increasingly popular theory of 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Wenger (2006) explains that communities of practice are:

> formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope.
>
> (Wenger, 2006, p.1)

There are three important characteristics of a community of practice: the domain, the community and the practice (Wenger, 2006) and these characteristics are acknowledged, albeit differently, in Swales' (1990) concept of discourse community. Just as a discourse community is understood as having '*a broadly agreed set of common goals*' (Swales, 1990, p.24, italics in original), Wenger (2006) explains that a community of practice 'has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest'. In the same way in which a discourse community is defined by Swales (1990) as having '*mechanisms of communication among its members*' (p.25, italics in original), members of a community of practice are understood to be 'build[ing] relationships that enable them to learn from each other' (Wenger, 2006). Discourse communities are defined as '*utilizing and hence possessing one of more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims*' along with having '*acquired some specific lexis*'

(Swales, 1990, p.26, italics in original). Similarly, in Lave and Wenger's (1991) conceptualisation of a community of practice, a community 'is not merely a community of interest' (Wenger, 2006) but is instead one in which members:

> develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems ... A good conversation with a stranger on an airplane may give you all sorts of interesting insights, but it does not in itself make for a community of practice ... The "windshield wipers" engineers at an auto manufacturer make a concerted effort to collect and document the tricks and lessons they have learned into a knowledge base. By contrast, nurses who meet regularly for lunch in a hospital cafeteria may not realize that their lunch discussions are one of their main sources of knowledge about how to care for patients. Still, in the course of all these conversations, they have developed a set of stories and cases that have become a shared repertoire for their practice.

(Wenger, 2006, p.1)

Before undertaking this project, I was aware of Lave and Wenger's (1991) 'communities of practice' theory and the complex insights it affords in a variety of settings. As this project progressed, however, I came to think about participants' life stories as representative of their participation within 'discourse communities' (Swales, 1990) as opposed to 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). As outlined in the opening of this chapter, a grounded theory approach was adopted in this research and Swales' (1990) concept of 'discourse community' enabled 'the formulation of an interpretation from the data up' (Knight, 2002, p.187).

5.4   Personal and Official Discourse Communities

In the fieldwork stage of the project, participants' personal stories therefore came to be understood using the concept of 'discourse community'. In their life history interviews, however, participants made reference to memberships within a number of discourse communities ranging from families, friends, neighbourhood and social networking to healthcare, religion, education, employment and law enforcement services. I came to understand these different discourse communities using a particular distinction – that of personal and official discourse communities – and, as following chapters will illustrate, it is a distinction which became fundamental to the study.

Similar distinctions have been made in other work. As discussed in Chapter 1, Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' distinguishes between the standpoint of people and the ruling relations. Similarly, in *Learning to Labour*, Willis (1983) explores class culture, including counter-school and shopfloor cultures, and distinguishes between 'informal groups' and 'official authority' (p.54). In *Lives on the Boundary*, Rose (1989) narrates his high school experiences of vocational education and an academic 'College Prep program', which he describes as different worlds, each with their own distinct rules and languages (p.p. 30-31). Rose (1989) describes the 'interior life' of his childhood family (p.44), along with 'the personal as well as public oppressiveness of life in South Los Angeles' (p.46). In his research with two learner groups in one 'high poverty school, in a high crime area', Meyer (2010) encourages the children to 'tell the truths about their out-of-school lives by writing and talking about them in school' (p.p.xi-xii). The result of Meyer's (2010) work is two very different portraits of the children, reflected in the book's title: *Official Portraits and Unofficial Counterportraits of 'At Risk' Students.* Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) work 'identifies

research as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other' (p.2). These examples illustrate how social life is conceptualised using binary oppositions: the standpoint of people versus the ruling relations in Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people'; the informal groups versus official authority in Willis' (1983) *Learning to Labour*; the personal / interior versus the public in Rose's (1989) *Lives on the Boundary*; the official portraits versus unofficial counterportraits of Meyer's (2010) work; and the West versus the Other in Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Building on these works and drawing specifically on Swales' (1990) definition of discourse community and Smith's (2005) sociology for people, the following table illustrates the differences between what I refer to from this point onwards as personal and official discourse communities:

Characteristic of a discourse community (Swales, 1990):	Personal discourse community	Official discourse community
Has a broadly agreed set of common goals	Goals are tacit and are informed by members' everyday/everynight worlds (Smith, 2005) Goals are not measurable	Goals are formally inscribed in documents and are informed by the ruling relations (Smith, 2005) Goals are measurable
Has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members	Informal conversation-based communication, including face-to-face, telephone, informal written documents, text messaging, social networking, photographs, other important personal items (e.g. cards and gifts)	Formal correspondence which may include appointments, meetings, formal written documents, etc

Uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback	Members participate in information exchange opportunities through the above mechanisms These are informal routines which take place as opportunities arise and are often undocumented	Members participate in information exchange opportunities through the above mechanisms These are formal routines which take place at specific intervals and are documented
Utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims	Members abide by and continue to develop discoursal expectations created by genres associated with vernacular literacies	Members abide by and continue to develop discoursal expectations created by genres associated with dominant literacies
Has acquired some specific lexis	Community-specific lexis may include informal abbreviations, names, etc	Community-specific lexis may include formal abbreviations, acronyms etc
Has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise	Changes to community membership may result from birth, death, marriage, divorce, ageing and the beginning or ending of relationships Membership documented in less formal ways	Changes to community membership more clear-cut: commencing or ending medical treatment, an education course, and so on. Membership documented through formal correspondence, as above

Table 5.1: Characteristics of personal and official discourse communities

In the fieldwork stage of the study, the distinction between personal and official discourse communities, as illustrated above, therefore emerged as a useful way of exploring and understanding the biographical data collected in this project. Discussing an example of a discourse community, however, Swales (1990) explains that 'the distinction between insider

and outsider is not absolute but consists of gradations' (p.29). Similarly, the distinction between personal and official discourse communities in this study is not an absolute one. Rather, as a result of initial analyses of the biographical data, the distinction is used to reflect the ways in which participants appear to be discussing their life stories, experiences and relationships. While the distinction between personal and official discourse communities is therefore considered to be a useful one for this study, it is important to acknowledge that an adult's participation in social life cannot be fully understood using such a simplistic dichotomy. In fact, as opposed to separate entities existing independently of one another, the data began to illustrate how personal and official discourse communities can be considered to be permeable, with participants' memberships across different communities interleaving and overlapping. As will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, participants' appear to negotiate interleaving and overlapping memberships of personal and official discourse communities, with these often feeding into one another.

In my distinction between personal and official discourse communities, illustrated in the above table, there are a number of important differences. For Swales (1990), the first characteristic of a discourse community is that it has a broadly agreed set of common goals. In the case of personal discourse communities, these goals are tacit and informed by the community members' everyday/everynight worlds (Smith, 2005), including their relationships within these. A family, for example, is a personal discourse community and its shared goal may be to love, care for and support its members. Over the life course, a person is likely to be a member of a number of family discourse communities, including the family/families they lived with when growing up, their family unit at present within their own home, and broader family discourse communities that include other relationships. Similarly, friendship groups can be viewed as distinct personal discourse communities and, again,

people are likely to have multiple memberships at different stages in their lives. An official discourse community's goals are informed by the ruling relations (Smith, 2005) and are formally inscribed in documents. Where participants' narrate becoming a member of a formal education course, for example, they therefore become a member of an official discourse community whose existence is informed by various policy documents. Both personal and official discourse communities are concerned with documenting the achievement of its shared goals although, as will be discussed, this is done through the use of different practices and texts.

Texts are therefore important in discourse communities for a number of reasons. As illustrated above, texts are important in documenting an official discourse community's common goals. Texts also play an important role in representing the extent to which a discourse community achieves its shared goals. Just as its common goals are documented through dominant literacy practices, an official discourse community also measures and documents the achievement of these goals through the use of texts which can be categorised as dominant literacy practices. Within personal discourse communities, the extent to which a community achieves its shared goals – loving, caring for and supporting one another – is gauged through people's feelings, along with texts that can be categorised as vernacular literacies, with greeting cards and text messages being just two examples.

The mechanisms of intercommunication among members within personal and official discourse communities are also distinctly different. As will be illustrated in Chapter 7, communication among members of personal discourse communities draws on vernacular literacies such as informal writing and speech, photographs and significant personal items. These intercommunications take place through a variety of mediums including face-to-face

conversations, social networking websites and text messaging. While communication between members of official discourse communities may also include, for example, informal conversations, the concern with documenting and quantifying achievement of its shared goals results in the use of more formal correspondence including formal written documents. Personal discourse communities can therefore be understood as possessing vernacular communicative genres to further their aims, while official discourse communities draw on dominant communicative genres. These participatory mechanisms are used 'to provide information and feedback' to community members (Swales, 1990, p.26), along with documenting discourse community membership. Both personal and official discourse communities undergo constant changes in their community memberships, but these changes arise for different reasons and are documented in different ways. Within a family personal discourse community, for example, changes to community membership may occur as a result of birth, death, marriage and divorce, while other reasons for changes may include ageing and the beginning or ending of relationships.

Returning to the different mechanisms of intercommunication among members of different types of discourse communities, membership of personal discourse communities is documented in this study through the use of vernacular literacies, including storytelling, photographs and significant personal items, while membership of official discourse communities is documented through the use of dominant literacies.

In *Texts, Facts and Femininity*, Smith (1990) focuses on 'the socially organized and organizing practices of using language that constitute objectified knowledges' which, she argues, 'are embedded in and integral to the relations of ruling – the kind of knowledge that bureaucracies produce and sociologists depend on' (p.4):

Thus the practices of thinking and writing that are of special concern here are those that convert what people experience directly in their everyday / everynight world into forms of knowledge in which people as subjects disappear and in which their perspectives on their own experience are transposed and subdued by the magisterial forms of objectifying discourse.

(Smith, 1990, p.4)

Dominant literacy practices can therefore be understood to be part of the governing processes of society, and as concerned with issues which are:

... formulated because they are administratively relevant, not because they are significant first in the experience of those who live them. The kinds of facts and events that matter to sociologists have already been shaped and given their character and substance by the methods and practice of governing.

(Smith, 1990, p.15)

As illustrated above, the texts drawn on within each type of discourse community are different, with official discourse communities characterised by their use of texts predominantly associated with dominant literacies, and personal discourse communities by their use of texts predominantly related to vernacular literacies. These differences in the use and privileging of different literacy practices are also important in relation to the forms of knowledge which are represented, produced and privileged across the two different types of discourse community.

5.5   Forms and privileging of knowledge

Official discourse community goals are informed by the ruling relations and are concerned with 'facts and events' that have been formulated because they are administratively relevant' to the discourse community's objectives, resulting in the production of objectified knowledge (Smith, 1990, p.15). In contrast, the texts at work within personal discourse communities represent issues that 'are significant first in the experience of those who live them' (Smith, 1990, p.15), representing and producing a local, embodied knowledge. To illustrate the repression of local knowledge within public discourse, or textual reality, Smith (1990) draws on one example: 'the workings of a royal commission of inquiry into a series of unexplained deaths on a cardiology ward for infants in the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children in 1983' (p.101). Smith (1990) explains how, throughout the inquiry, physicians and nurses 'were treated in strikingly different ways', with the physicians 'treated as equals of the judge and lawyers', while the nurses were 'asked questions about their personal and social lives', 'interrupted and badgered' (p.102). The nurses' 'knowledge was never made use of' and, indeed, 'was not recognized as knowledge' (Smith, 1990, p.102). Smith (1990) explains that, throughout the inquiry, the assumption or 'framework of the nurse or nurses committing multiple murders was an implicit organizer of the proceeding' (p.102) and that:

> The discounting of nurses' professional knowledge and their status as credible
> witnesses sealed in this effect by depriving the course of inquiry of a source of
> specialized knowledge, one particularly capable of speaking of the actual, local
> sequences of events leading to the deaths of the children, of the technical
> practices of how medications are approved and administered, and of the working

order of the cardiac ward that must have been relevant to a consideration of who might have killed the children.

(Smith, 1990, p.103)

This, Smith (1990) argues, is an example of 'actual organized practices silencing women' to produce 'a piece of public virtual reality' (p.104). Chapter 1 introduced Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' which distinguishes between the 'ruling relations' and the 'standpoint of people'. This distinction results in the conceptualisation of two different epistemologies: knowledge which is rooted in one's everyday / everynight lives and relationships, and which is therefore embodied within the knower; and the objectified modes of knowing of the ruling relations which '[divorce] the subject from the particularized settings and relationships' of everyday life (Smith, 1990, p.13). Smith's (1990) above example illustrates how local, embodied knowledge can be repressed by the objectified modes of knowing of the ruling relations, and how different epistemologies are both produced and privileged within different discourse communities. Importantly, Smith's (2005) 'notion of the ruling relations':

recognizes a major transformation in the organization of society in which "consciousness", "mind", "rationality", "organization", and so on become reconstructed in objectified forms external to particular individuals.

(Smith, 2005, p.69)

Discussing discourse community membership, Swales (1990) states that members must have a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise. This point about expertise is important because the definition of an expert differs depending upon the epistemologies valued within different discourse communities. The body is an important part of Smith's

(2005) alternative sociology and she explains that traditional sociology, and all ruling relations, are based on a 'dichotomy of mind and discarded body' (p.23). Beginning from the site of the knower, as the women's movement did, entailed beginning with the body as the site of experience, which therefore 'refused the separation of body and mind' (Smith, 2005, p.23). Discourse communities governed by the ruling relations, such as traditional sociology, privilege objectified modes of knowing, associated with the mind as opposed to the body, and Smith (2005) asserts that this 'dominance of mind is more than conceptual; it is a local achievement of people who are active in the social relations that rule' (p.24). Smith (2005) explains that:

> The strategy of beginning from women's standpoint in the local actualities of the everyday / everynight world does not bridge this division. It collapses it. The embodied knower begins in her experience. Here she is an expert. I mean by this simply that when it comes to knowing her way around in it, how things get done, where the bus stop for the B-line bus is, at which supermarket she can pick up both organic vegetables and lactate-reduced milk, and all the unspecifiables of her daily doings and the local conditions on which she relies – when it comes to knowing these matters, she is an expert.
>
> (Smith, 2005, p.24)

The twelve participants in this study are from a range of social backgrounds and vary in age from their early twenties to mid sixties. Despite their individual differences, however, I came to not only understand their biographical narratives in terms of personal and official discourse communities, but also to understand these different communities as producing and privileging

different types of knowledge and ways of knowing. At this stage, I turned to other studies which themselves deal with different conceptualisations of knowledge.

In *Women's Ways of* Knowing, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1997) 'describe five different perspectives from which women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority' (p.3). The five positions in Belenky et al's (1997) epistemological scheme are Silence, Received Knowledge, Subjective Knowledge, Procedural Knowledge and Constructed Knowledge. The first position in the epistemological scheme, 'Silence', represents 'an extreme in denial of self and in dependence on external authority for direction' (p.24):

> While [women in this epistemological position] feel passive, reactive, and dependent, they see authorities as being all-powerful, if not overpowering. These women are aware of power that is accrued to authorities through might but not through expertise ... The women see blind obedience to authorities as being of utmost importance for keeping out of trouble and ensuring their own survival, because trying to know "why" is not thought to be either particularly possible or important.
>
> (Belenky et al, 1997, p.p.27-28)

By contrast, people occupying the final position in their epistemological scheme, Constructed Knowledge, 'understand that answers to all questions vary depending on the context in which they are asked and on the frame of reference of the person doing the asking' (Belenky et al, 1997, p.138). From this epistemological position, women are able to 'imagine and be sensitive to the interior life of others' (Belenky et al, 1997, p.143):

Compared to other positions, there is a capacity at the position of constructed knowledge to attend to another person and to feel related to that person in spite of what may be enormous differences.

(Belenky et al, 1997, p.143)

Belenky et al's (1997) scheme suggests the important relationship between epistemologies and identities. In Beth Hatt's (2007) research with marginalised young people, she reveals how her participants distinguish between 'book smart' and 'street smart':

This distinction is a direct challenge by the youth to the dominant discourse of smartness or "book smarts" as it operates in schools. To the youth, "street smarts" are more important because they are connected to being able to maneuver through structures in their lives such as poverty, the police, street culture, and abusive "others". This distinction is key because street smarts stress agency in countering social structures whereas, for many of the youth, book smarts *represented* those structures ...

(Hatt, 2007, p.145)

Along with providing another example of different forms of knowledge, Hatt's (2007) work also illustrates the importance of the official discourse community of school as a site in which knowledge is socio-culturally produced and then 'embodied through academic identity' (p.146):

I define academic identity as the ways we come to understand ourselves within

and in relation to the institution of schooling and how this shapes our own

perceptions of efficacy, ability, and success in relation to academics ... Every

student that is a part of the institution of schooling develops an academic identity

that helps to shape who we think we are, who others think we are, and who we

think we should become.

(Hatt, 2007, p.146)

Like Hatt (2007), Wendy Luttrell's (1997) work also stresses the importance of school as a

site of identity formation and focuses on different forms of knowledge. *School-smart and

Mother-wise* (Luttrell, 1997) 'is based on the life stories of working-class women' enrolled

on two different adult basic education classes in America, one from 1980 to 1984 with white,

working class women and then from 1984 to 1988 asking 'the same questions of working

class women of color (they called themselves black)' (p.xiii):

I analyze these life stories for the insight they give into the twisted relations of

selfhood, class, race, and gender identity, and schooling. By twisted I mean

simultaneously entangled and at odds, interwoven and warped. Through the

women's stories, we see how they viewed themselves and others – whom they

thought was womanly, smart, credible, and worthy of respect, and why.

(Luttrell, 1997, p.p.xiii – xiv)

Luttrell (1997) explains that 'School is by no means the only site where people define

themselves and their social worth but ... it is a formative one', adding that the women

participants in her research 'came to see themselves as less than equal – if not unworthy – students' (p.5):

> ... the streetwise or commonsense knowledge that these women brought to school was, in their view, at best disregarded and at worst ridiculed by the teachers. Students like themselves, who had "country ways" or "problems with authority", could not be expected to achieve. In contrast, students of higher social standing were automatically viewed by the teachers as smart.
>
> (Luttrell, 1997, p.5)

Just as Smith's (2005) work illustrates how local knowledge can be repressed by objectified ways of knowing, Luttrell's (1997) work highlights how her participants perceive their 'streetwise' knowledge to be 'disregarded' and even 'ridiculed' within the official discourse community of school.

These works all suggest an important disjunction which is returned to in later chapters. Smith (1990), for example, acknowledges a 'disjunction between how women experience the world and the concepts and theoretical schemes by which society's self-consciousness is inscribed' (p.13). The introductory chapter of *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan, 1993) begins with the same concern:

> The disparity between women's experience and the representation of human development, noted throughout the psychological literature, has generally been seen to signify a problem in women's development. Instead, the failure of women to fit existing models of human growth may point to a problem in the

representation, a limitation in the conception of human condition, an omission of certain truths about life.

<div align="right">(Gilligan, 1993, p.p.1-2)</div>

Illustrating this disjunction, Gilligan (1993) discusses at length an example of an eleven year old boy, Jake, and an eleven year girl, Amy, who 'were asked to resolve' a dilemma 'devised by Kohlberg to measure moral development in adolescence', a dilemma in which 'a man named Heinz considers whether or not to steal a drug which he cannot afford to buy in order to save the life of his wife' (p.25):

> ... the different logic of Amy's response calls attention to the interpretation of the interview itself ... Amy is considering not *whether* Heinz should act in this situation ("*should* Heinz steal the drug?") but rather *how* Heinz should act in response to his awareness of his wife's need ("Should Heinz *steal* the drug?") ... Kohlberg's theory provides a ready response, manifest in the scoring of Jake's judgements a full stage higher than Amy's in moral maturity ... Since most of her responses fall through the sieve of Kohlberg's scoring system, her responses appear from his perspective to lie outside the moral domain.

<div align="right">(Gilligan, 1993, p.31)</div>

The exploration of literature concerned with different ways of knowing informed the way in which I came to conceive of personal and official discourse communities and, as Chapter 6 illustrates, this influenced the analytical framework used to explore both narrative types under investigation in this study.

5.6   Building Tasks and Tools of Inquiry (Gee, 2011)

As illustrated in the previous pages of this chapter, in the early stages of carrying out the 48 life history interviews, I began developing my ideas about participants' data. Reflections and ideas were often recorded in a research diary shortly after the interviews and further developed when transcribing each interview. In developing my thoughts about the data into an analytical framework, I turned to Gee's (2011) discourse analysis. In *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis, 3rd Edition*, Gee (2011) introduces 'six questions to ask about seven things' to achieve 'An "Ideal" Discourse Analysis' (p.121). Gee (2011) refers to these six questions as 'tools of inquiry' which 'lead us as discourse analysts to ask specific sorts of questions about our data' (p.214). The first of the six tools of inquiry is 'Social Languages' and Gee (2011) explains that people 'use different varieties of language to enact and recognize different identities in different settings ... I will call each such variety a "social language"' (p.28). The second tool of inquiry is 'Discourses', used with a capital "D" to represent 'ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity' (Gee, 2011, p.29). The third of Gee's (2011) six tools of inquiry is '"Conversations" with a capital "C":

> Most of us today are aware of the societal Conversations going on around us about things like abortion, creationism, global warming, terrorism, and so on and so forth through many other issues. To know about these Conversations is to know about the various sides one can take in debates about these issues and what sorts of people are usually on each side.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.29)

Another tool of inquiry is Intertextuality and Gee (2011) explains that 'When we speak or write, our words often allude to or relate to, in some fashion, other "texts" or certain types of "texts", where by "texts" I mean worlds other people have said or written' (p.29). The fifth of Gee's (2011) six tools of inquiry is 'form function correlations' which refers to 'Any correlation in terms of which a given word or type of word, phrase, or clause is associated with a given communication function' (p.205). The remaining tool of inquiry (Gee, 2011) is 'situated meanings' which refers to:

> The specific meanings words or phrases take on in actual contexts of use. Speakers and writers construct their utterances or sentences to guide listeners and readers in constructing these specific meanings based on what was said and the context in which it was said.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.211)

Along with the six tools of inquiry, Gee (2011) proposes that an 'ideal discourse analysis' also address seven building tasks which he explains are seven 'things in the world' that language is used to build (p.17):

> This book takes the view that people use language actively to build things in the world. Just as hammers and saws can be used to build buildings, so, too, grammar can be used to build things in the world or to give meaning and value to things in the world (think of this as a form of decorating or renovation).
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.202)

The first of these seven building tasks is 'Significance' and Gee (2011) explains that language is used to 'render [things] significant or to lessen their significance, to signal to others how we view their significance' (p.17). The second building task is 'Practices' and Gee (2011) explains:

> We use language to get recognized as engaging in a certain sort of practice or activity. For example, I talk and act in one way and I am engaged in formally opening a committee meeting; I talk and act in another way and I am engaged in "chit chat" before the official start of the meeting.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.17)

The third of Gee's (2011) building tasks is 'Identities' and he explains that 'We use language to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role, that is, to build an identity here and now'. Importantly, too, we also 'often enact our identities by speaking and writing in such a way as to attribute a certain identity to others, an identity that we explicitly or implicitly compare or contrast to our own' (Gee, 2011, p.18). Another of Gee's (2011) building tasks is 'Relationships':

> We use language to signal what sort of relationship we have, want to have, or are trying to have with our listener(s), reader(s), or other people, groups or institutions about whom we are communicating. We use language to build social relationships.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.18)

For Gee (2011), 'Social Goods' are 'Anything a person or group in society wants and values' (p.211) and the fifth building task in his discourse analysis is 'Politics (the distribution of social goods)'. Gee (2011) explains that 'We use language to convey a perspective on the nature of the distribution of social goods, that is, to build a perspective on social goods' (p.19). Discussing his sixth building task, 'Connections', Gee (2011) explains 'We use language to render certain things connected or relevant (or not) to other things, that is, to build connections or relevance ... Even when things seem inherently connected or relevant to each other, we can use language to break or mitigate such connections' (p.19). The remaining building task in Gee's (2011) ideal discourse analysis is 'Sign Systems and Knowledge':

> We can use language to make certain sign systems and certain forms of knowledge and belief relevant or privileged, or not, in given situations, that is, to build privilege or prestige for one sign system or way of knowing over another.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.20)

Gee's (2011) six tools of inquiry and seven building tasks result in a total of 42 questions, although he explains that 'Asking and answering these 42 questions about any one piece of data would lead to a very long analysis indeed ... For the most part, any real discourse analysis deals only with some of the questions' (p.122). Indeed, asking 42 questions about the 24 narratives in this study certainly would lead to a very long analysis. To develop my ideas about the data into an analytical framework, I therefore draw on several aspects, as opposed to all, of Gee's (2011) discourse analysis. The decision about which tools of inquiry and building tasks are most relevant to this study's investigation is informed by both the

project research questions and the ideas emerging in the fieldwork stage of the study. Here is a reminder of the research questions:

1. Within their Skills for Life narratives, what identities are constructed for the adult learners?

2. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do the adults construct for themselves?

3. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within each of the two narratives?

4. What are the similarities and differences between the identities constructed within each representation?

5. What are the similarities and differences between the meanings assigned to the literacy programme within each representation?

6. What implications do these similarities and differences have for practice, policy and research?

As the first two research questions focus on participants' narrative identities, one of Gee's (2011) building tasks considered relevant to the two narratives under investigation in this study is 'Identities'. The following 'Discourse Analysis Question' will therefore be asked when analysing both the biographical and Skills for Life narratives:

What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as operative)? What identity of identities is this piece of language attributing to others and how does this help the speaker or writer enact his or her own identity?

(Gee, 2011, p.18)

The third research question focuses on the meanings assigned to the literacy programme that each participant was enrolled on at the time of being recruited to the study. It became clear in the fieldwork stage of the study that answering this question required analysing each narrative in relation to what is being valued within each. The second building task of relevance to the two narratives in this study is therefore 'Politics' or 'the distribution of 'social goods' (Gee, 2011, p.19).

> Social goods are anything some people in society want and value ... You may not want to be accepted as a *Yu-Gi-Oh!* player and maybe you resisted being a "good student" in school. Then these are not social goods for you. But some things are social goods for you. Perhaps, being accepted as an "acceptable" ("normal," "good," "adequate") citizen, man or woman, worker, friend, activist, football fan, educated person, Native American, religious person, Christian, Jewish person, or Islamic person, or what have you, is a social good for you.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.p.5-6)

This chapter has discussed how, as the fieldwork-stage progressed, knowledge and different ways of knowing began to feature strongly within the interview data. As previously outlined, 'Knowledge' is one of Gee's (2011) building tasks because, as he explains, we use language to construct 'certain forms of knowledge' and to privilege a particulars ways of knowing over others (p.20). The building task, Knowledge, is therefore relevant to this study in relation to exploring the 'forms of knowledge (ways of knowing)' being referred to in each narrative, along with 'how they are used and privileged or disprivileged' (Gee, 2011, p.102). I also

came to understand participants' references to types of knowledge and ways of knowing in relation to one of Gee's (2011) tools of inquiry: as representative of a Big "C" Conversation:

> "Conversations" (with a capital "C") are debates in society or within specific social groups (over focused issues like smoking, abortion, or school reform) that large numbers of people recognize, both in terms of what "sides" there are to take in such debates and what sorts of people tend to be on each side.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.201)

As illustrated in the opening of this chapter, I came to distinguish between two types of discourse community: personal and official. Each type of discourse community is characterised by its use of particular literacies (see Table 5.1) and, as previously discussed, this influences the forms of knowledge that are represented, produced and privileged across the two different types of community. Along with understanding knowledge to be a Big "C" Conversation, it can therefore be understood in relation to one of Gee's (2011) building tasks, as a 'social good', because:

> Social goods are potentially at stake any time we speak or write so as to state or imply that something or someone is "adequate", "normal", "good", or "acceptable" (or the opposite) in some fashion important to some group in society or society as a whole.
>
> (Gee, 2011, p.19)

5.7   Chapter summary

This chapter has focused on the data analysis which took place in the fieldwork stage of the study, illustrating how data analysis in this research did 'not come after data gathering' (Silverman, 2002, p.121), and how, instead, 'Grounded theory researchers collect data and analyze it simultaneously from the initial phases of research' (Charmaz, 2003, p.311). The chapter illustrates how, in the fieldwork stage, it became clear that the experiences being narrated could be understood as representing participation within discourse communities (Swales, 1990) across different domains of activity. Along with coming to understand participants' personal stories using the concept of 'discourse community' (Swales), the chapter explains how I arrived at a particular distinction – that of personal and official discourse communities – and provides a definition of each. The chapter details how literature concerned with different ways of knowing further informed the distinction between personal and official discourse communities. Finally, the chapter has illustrated how Gee's (2011) discourse analysis informed the analysis of the data collected.

Chapter 6 will now explain how the concepts introduced in this chapter came to be incorporated into an analytical framework. This includes the building tasks selected from Gee's (2011) discourse analysis – Identities, Politics (Social Goods) and Knowledge – along with the selected tool of inquiry – Conversations (Gee, 2011). In addition, Chapter 6 will detail the transition made from the twelve participants' interview data to the twelve biographical narratives.

Chapter 6: Post-Fieldwork Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 has illustrated how a framework for analysis began to develop throughout the course of the project's fieldwork. In this period of time, which spanned many months, participants shared with me their life stories, first in the classroom and then within the interview setting, and in my role as researcher I became inevitably immersed in the many activities which this stage entailed, including meeting with tutors, visiting classrooms, arranging participant interviews and suitable interview venues, exchanging text messages and phone calls to keep in contact with participants between meetings, transcribing the interviews, and posting transcripts for member-checking. As opposed to forming distinct stages, the timing of these different activities therefore overlapped and, rather than overlook the importance of the fieldwork, the previous chapter has outlined how these experiences, and my reflections on particular arising themes, came to inform the data analysis. This chapter now discusses the way in which concepts discussed in Chapter 5 came to be incorporated into an analytical framework. First, however, it is important to discuss the transition from the twelve participants' interview data to the twelve biographical narratives.

6.2 The transition from interview data to biographical narrative

Each learner-participant was interviewed on four occasions, with these meetings lasting between twenty and 110 minutes. This resulted in a total of 42 hours of interview recordings, equating to an average of three and a half hours for each participant. In addition, other

participant data collected include mind-maps, autobiographical writing, and photographs - both of the personal items brought along and discussed in interview 4 and, more generally, of important times, events and locations in their lives which they had chosen to share. The project was therefore successful in eliciting a variety of rich, in-depth, qualitative data about the people who took part. The challenge, however, was to construct a biographical narrative for each participant using this data. The reason for this was two-fold: first, it would enable me to provide each participant with a bound document – their own life history story and a final product of their participation in the project; and second, it would create twelve cohesive and coherent narratives, and therefore twelve representations of each participant's interview data to form accessible and analysable units of study. To achieve this, I chose to draw on 'Neonarrative' methodology, introduced by Alexander, Muir and Chant (1992) and developed by Stewart (1997; 2008).

6.3   Neonarrative methodology

I was introduced to neonarrative methodology by a colleague whom herself had drawn on it in her own doctoral thesis (Morgan, 2001). In 'Interrogating Stories: How teachers think they learned to teach', Alexander, Muir and Chant (1992) use narrative inquiry to gain 'insights into how novice teachers gain their idiosyncratic orientations to teaching, because as a technique it can accommodate flexibly the many stories student teachers have to tell' (p.59). Alexander et al (1992) use a quantitative approach to neonarrative methodology to condense the vast amount of qualitative data gathered, a total of 'Between 16 and 20 pages of handwritten script by each of the 19 students' involved (p.61):

Common or recurring thoughts from the narratives are used to construct condensed narratives as representatives of the collective experiences of the preservice teachers in the study ... As a technique, it allows large amounts of prose to be reduced to the frequencies and associations of words used within various texts.

<div align="right">(Alexander, Muir and Chant, 1992, p.p. 59 – 66)</div>

The use of neonarrative methodology in this study, however, differs to Alexander et al's (1992); as opposed to a quantitative condensing or reduction of participants' interview data, the approach is instead used as a qualitative reconstruction of participants' life history narratives as told in interview. Like Alexander et al (1992), Stewart's (1997; 2008) use and development of the neonarrative method is 'oriented towards people's ideas about the world and/or their experiences of it' and 'was designed to describe and explore the major themes or tensions' relating to visual arts and art education (Stewart, 2008, p.158). In a similar way, neonarrative is used in this study to describe and explore people's life histories and the major themes emerging from their stories, and tensions relating to literacy education. There are two important aspects to the neonarrative methodology: the narratives which act as 'tools for assembling personal accounts' within the interview and which are represented in the interview transcripts; and the neonarrative which is constructed from these narratives, but which emerges as a different story (Stewart, 2008, p.158). This also therefore illustrates two important aspects of my own study. First, when data analysis is viewed as a process of organising and reducing data, the transition from life history interview data to neonarrative in this study is an important stage of data analysis; and, second, the neonarrative is consequently not the same as the narratives that make up the interview data but, instead, is a particular

representation of those narratives. As Stewart (2008) explains, the formation of neonarratives from the interview data gives:

> cohesion to the otherwise disparate narratives. What Neonarrative method presents is a process for analysing what actually happened according to the people involved.
>
> (Stewart, 2008, p.159)

The use of neonarrative methodology offers several benefits to my study. First, the approach is in line with, and complements, the life history interview methodology. As discussed in Chapter 5, life history interviewing in this study has entailed the use of task-focussed conversations between the participants and me. In interview 1, the task involved participants selecting and answering question cards. The remaining meetings required participants to prepare in advance by undertaking tasks which then formed the basis of the discussion: a mind-map for interview 2; a piece of autobiographical writing for interview 3; and stories about personal items in interview 4. The tasks were intentionally multimodal and aimed at providing participants with a variety of opportunities to tell and approaches to telling their personal life stories. This is in line with neonarrative which, as Stewart (2008) explains, is a 'qualitative interactive approach' to research which combines 'autobiographical data and interview texts' in an 'interdisciplinary research framework' (p.157). Importantly, neonarrative methodology acknowledges that neonarratives represent 'different stories' from the interview data itself (Stewart, 2008, p.158). In addition, the 'setting of the research interview' (Stewart, 2008, p.157) is acknowledged as the location and medium through which this knowledge is structured. To summarise, then, the neonarratives constructed in this study

are to be understood as particular narrative representations of participants' life history interview data, as opposed to being their life histories.

6.4   Neonarratives, Ethics and Identity

Another important benefit of neonarrative methodology relates research ethics with the construction of identity through storytelling. To understand the significance of this link, it is useful to briefly discuss the ways in which participants chose to edit their interview transcripts and draft neonarratives. As all interviews were recorded, participant editing can be said to have begun within the interview itself. In some meetings, for example, participants wanted me to be aware of a life event and the details of their experience, but did not necessarily want this reproducing, or being represented in as much detail, in their printed neonarratives. This happened several times throughout the study but in different ways. Sometimes, in interview, participants commented that 'this isn't to be included' or words to this effect, in which case the relevant sections were edited out at the point of transcription. To encourage the flow of conversation in interview, I also went to great lengths to reassure participants that they had 'full editing rights' and could remove information from the transcripts as they wished. On occasions, participants held back certain aspects of particular stories until the recording had ceased, suggesting that they wanted me to know, or at least wanted to *tell* it, but did not want it printed in their neonarrative.

For obvious reasons, changes such as these cannot be discussed in any detail. There are, however, other changes which can. Of the twelve participants, all edited at least one of their interview transcripts. These changes ranged from altering one word or adding a sentence for

clarification to the removal of large parts of a transcript and, in one case, a full interview transcript. In some cases the changes made to transcripts related to concerns about what would become the focus of the neonarrative. In Jalisa's first interview, for example, she chose to focus on her daughter, Katie. As her neonarrative reveals, both becoming pregnant with Katie and problems with the birth are key events in Jalisa's life history which continue to significantly shape her life. After reading the first transcript, however, Jalisa indicated that she did not wish her whole neonarrative to centre around Katie, even if the interviews were mostly centred around her. This was a consideration when constructing Jalisa's neonarrative. A similar issue also arose with Anne. In her first interview, Anne chose to focus on the events surrounding the death of her first son. Unlike the following three interviews, Anne was very upset in the first meeting, but insisted that it was important for her to tell me the details about this event in her life and its effects on her and her family. As a critical event in her life, it was therefore important to knowing Anne and understanding her life history. When she read the interview transcript, however, Anne was surprised by how much detail it contained. We therefore discussed ways that we could ensure her first son remained an important aspect of her neonarrative, while removing some of the detail that Anne found upsetting to read. This was a particularly sensitive aspect of the life history interview process but, importantly, Anne did not regret sharing these stories in interview 1, she simply did not wish to re-read it all in her neonarrative. Whilst the neonarrative was 'toned down', what had been important to Anne was the sharing of the story in interview; she had wanted me to know and, once I knew, I therefore knew her better.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the intended audience of the neonarrative, known only to the participants, is very important. When asked, most indicated that they would share their final neonarrative with family members and close friends, though this would often be selective.

Undoubtedly, the intended audience of the neonarrative influenced some editing decisions and, in Beth's case, led to her removing an entire transcript from the study.

When I met with Beth for interview three, she was upset about something which had happened only days earlier and, although this was not the only topic of conversation in this meeting, it dominated the interview. I spoke with Beth a few days later and, given the sensitive nature of what she had discussed with me, she explained she felt uncomfortable about it being included in the study. The audio recording of this meeting was 80 minutes in duration and, as a result of this telephone conversation, this interview was never transcribed and was removed from Beth's data.

The changes made by participants suggest that, as well as neonarrative methodology being a means of reconstructing participants' interview data, it also offers another layer of storytelling, of 'organizing experience' and 'verifying identity' for the participant (Atkinson, 1998, p.p. 11-12). The difference is that often what participants chose to tell in interview differed from what they wished to be textually reproduced in the neonarrative. This is demonstrated further by some of the alterations participants chose to make to their draft neonarratives.

The following pages illustrate how, in the months following the life history interviews, I constructed the draft neonarratives. These were posted to each participant and several weeks later I either met in person or spoke by telephone with each person. These meetings were an opportunity to catch up and to discuss the draft neonarrative. They were recorded and, where necessary, were transcribed, although not member-checked.

Three of the twelve participants chose to make changes to their neonarratives. I met in person with Michal and he explained how there had been many changes in his life since we had last met. He was engaged to be married in a few weeks' time, was in the process of moving house and was enrolling on a work-sponsored college course. As Michal's neonarrative reveals, he had been through some difficult times in recent years and had at times been deeply unhappy. His life changes since the final interview now meant his neonarrative was very different to his life at the time we met to discuss it in March 2011, and he requested that I add an 'Update' section at the end. It was important to Michal that his fiancée and other new aspects of his life were included in the neonarrative.

Another participant, whom I spoke with by telephone, had read her draft neonarrative and was concerned that her mum did not feature in it as much as her dad. The concern was that because she had not talked much in interview about her mum, the neonarrative did not reflect the close relationship they shared. We talked for a few minutes on this topic and it was transcribed and included in the final neonarrative.

In her final interview, Alice chose to focus on photographs to discuss some key events in her life. Computer problems had prevented her from emailing these to me and so gaps were left in the relevant places of her final neonarrative for these to be inserted. Other participants, such as Isla, chose to make no changes at all to their neonarratives because, as she put it, 'that was exactly what was said'. The choice of whether or not to edit their transcripts and neonarrative was therefore entirely a personal one.

The construction of the neonarrative was an important stage of data analysis in this study, but for the research participants it was equally important as it provided an important opportunity

to review their personal life stories, in part in relation to their audience. Participants' editing of both their interview transcripts and their neonarratives demonstrates and lays bare some of the ways in which life stories facilitate the 'organizing [of] experience and [the] fashioning or verifying [of] identity' (Atkinson, 1998, p.p.11-12). Some editing decisions can therefore be attributed to the multiple positioning of each participant in this study; by taking part, they engaged in the co-construction of an identity as a research participant in interview with me, and through the neonarrative became the biographical 'I' of a printed and bound text that they may, or may not, share with family and friends.

In addition, as will be analysed later in this thesis, participants were also involved in the co-construction of themselves as adult literacy learners with their tutor and peers within the classroom. These positions are not the same and may in fact both overlap and differ significantly, revealing the complexity of the participants' involvement in this study. This multiple positioning is made more complex in this research because the biographical neonarratives were offered to participants for their own uses, as opposed to remaining solely an academic research text.

6.5   Constructing the Neonarratives

In neonarrative methodology, 'Themes act as organizers and can categorize data into phenomena, as clusters of information either relating to particular persons or sites, or to particular types or aspects of the social' (Stewart, 2008, p.161). As discussed in Chapter 5, in the fieldwork stage of this study, the concept of 'domain of activity' (Barton and Hamilton, 1998) came to be seen as a useful way of structuring participants' interview data into

coherent narratives, particularly as their storied experiences appeared to be situated within family, neighbourhood, education, workplace, religion and healthcare. Domains of activity were therefore used as a starting point in structuring the neonarrative. Using the software Atlas ti, each participant's interview data was coded under subheadings as illustrated in the table below:

Subheading / theme	This section includes
Personal	references to immediate family, neighbourhood, religion and personal health. In addition, it includes any data where the participant referred to themselves personally, including likes / dislikes and hobbies and interests.
Family and Friends	any reference to wider family and friends, beyond partners and children.
School and Growing Up	narratives about childhood and compulsory schooling.
Employment	narratives about employment, past and present.
College and Courses	discussions about any post-compulsory education and training, including in the workplace.
Future Plans	any reference to future hopes and plans.

Table 6.1: Coding of participant life history interview data

In the initial stages of organising the interview data into the restructured neonarratives, the above six categories were used to code all twelve participants' interview transcripts, mind-maps, personal writing, and photographs. This often took a number of days and the majority of each participant's interview data were coded. Aspects of transcripts which were not coded often included the opening of the meeting where the participant and I exchanged greetings, and towards the end of the interview when plans were made regarding the posting of the transcript and plans for the next meeting.

As I coded the data, I also excluded information which I was aware had already been coded in previous transcripts, although I included anything new. Following the coding of the data within the Atlas ti software, the output from each code was worked on within a Word document (please see Appendix 10 for an example of the output). This stage involved the re-ordering of life stories as well as the removal or merging of duplicate narratives. I often felt, however, that it was significant that a participant had returned to a life event in a later meeting to elaborate on it further in which case, rather than merging the data, the neonarrative clearly states the meetings at which particular aspects of the story arose.

Data were often categorised under more than one code, in which case decisions were made in this stage regarding where in the neonarrative it should appear. This was often flagged and returned to once the draft was complete before making a final decision in the context of the whole document. The construction of the neonarratives formed a significant part of this study and was a lengthy process. To capture the stages and reflections involved in constructing the neonarratives, I recorded notes in memo form within Atlas ti for each

participant (please see Appendix 11 for examples of these notes). Following my supervisor's suggestion, the questions addressed in these memos were:

1. How did [the participant] approach the four tasks and use the opportunities across the interviews?

2. What did I do when restructuring [the participant's] data into her neonarrative?

I found it useful to reflect on my notes for the first question when constructing the neonarrative. In my memo for Beth, for example, I reflected on how she had approached interview 1 by writing:

Beth picked a few cards at the start of this interview, but we only discussed one. The question was: 'Who, not necessarily still alive, would you most like to sit next to on a long-haul flight?'

Beth's answer was her mum, who died some years ago.

Most of this interview was around Beth's mum and family (has a large family). She also touched quickly on her childhood (the incident when playing in a car as a child) and also she described her 'sensitivity' / sense.

Beth was upset for much of this interview - starting with her mum, but also her fear for her health because her family members 'don't get past 60'.

(Notes made in Atlas ti about Beth)

My reflections on the first interview with Beth therefore reminded me just how important her mum and other family members were in her narratives, as well as how childhood experiences and health concerns were prevailing themes from interview 1 onwards. These were important

prompts for me when constructing Beth's neonarrative. My reflections on Beth's second interview transcript are as follows:

> At the start of the interview, Beth talks through a photograph of her family and also her wedding albums. She also shows me her son's 'Young Person of the Year' award.
>
> Beth did a mind-map for this meeting and chose to focus on one aspect of it: bullying.
>
> This was an intentional focus for her and Beth almost 'themed' this interview (bullying) in much the same way as she did interview 1 (her mum).
>
> <div align="right">(Notes made in Atlas ti about Beth)</div>

These notes acted as a reminder to me of how Beth had taken control of the interviews and, in preparing for them, had been very clear on what she had wanted to discuss. When coding Beth's interview data, I therefore also used the codes 'Mum' and 'bullying', as Beth had offered many lengthy narratives relating to each of these themes. These helped me to reconstruct the data but, importantly too, ensured the themes chosen by Beth herself had remained important within her neonarrative. In the process of editing, the reconstruction of narratives about Beth's mum formed the introduction to the 'Family and Friends' section of her neonarrative, and the data categorised as 'bullying' formed a significant part of Beth's 'School and Growing Up' section. Later, following the construction of Beth's draft neonarrative, I had recorded in the memo:

> IMP: Beth's neonarrative was surprisingly straightforward to put together, compared to some others. I put this in part down to Beth's telling of her life story

in a series of 'incidents' or 'episodes' as she refers to them, which she offered up in a thematic and chronological way. For example, interview 1 focus is her mum and interview 2 is bullying. She narrates these in a very clear way. When asked in interview 4 about her employment history, again, this is offered in a chronological way.

(Notes made in Atlas ti about Beth)

The notes I recorded in these memos therefore helped me to reconnect with each participant and their data, as they highlighted the different ways in which people had approached the interviews and, by doing so, took me back to those meetings and reminded me what had been important to each participant. Overall, my notes to question 2 across each of the memos reveal how, throughout the construction of the neonarrative, I endeavoured to think about what content and structure the participant herself would be happy with and it is evident that the audience for whom I was 'writing / editing' was each of the participants themselves.

Using the above six categories as codes to organise the data enabled the resulting neonarratives to be individual to each participant (please see Appendix 12 for excerpts from two participants' biographical neonarratives). This is demonstrated in the variation across the twelve neonarratives, not least in their length, ranging from 9000 to 21,500 words.

The six categories therefore became subheadings within the neonarratives themselves, although it was thought more appropriate that 'Personal' be renamed 'Introduction' before the final print. The order in which the subheadings appeared in the neonarratives differed by participant and additional subheadings were occasionally used. When coding Lexi's data, for example, I used the codes 'Brother' and 'Being a single parent' as she had spoken at length

about each of these. The data coded 'Brother' became a significant part of the 'Friends and Family' section of her neonarrative. However, I chose to leave 'Being a single parent' as its own section, as this was a recurring theme in Lexi's narratives and important to her life stories. Once all neonarratives were constructed in draft form and fully anonymized, I enlisted the help of a friend to proofread the texts.

6.6 Attending to voice: Voice-centred relational methodology

Gee's (2011) tools of inquiry and building tasks, introduced in the previous chapter, provide plenty of scope to explore both the biographical and ILP neonarratives. As outlined in the previous pages, however, the use of neonarrative methodology in the construction of participants' biographical narratives enabled a qualitative reconstruction of their life history interview data while avoiding the quantitative reduction of Alexander et al's (1992) study. The construction of the biographical neonarratives was a significant stage of data analysis and decisions about the subsequent stages were informed by my concern to 'attend to the quality' of this data (Charmaz, 2003, p.313). To achieve this, I turned to literature that advocates the importance of attending to participants' voices within qualitative research.

In *Researching Life Stories* (Goodley et al, 2004), Rebecca Lawthom presents an account of one woman's life, Colleen Stamford (p.p.15-25), and, in her analysis of it, draws 'upon voice relational approaches' (p.116). The voice relational approach 'arises from a long feminist tradition of engaging with and for women' and offers 'multiple readings of an account, potentially offering richness and complexity while retaining a self/person/individual within the story' (Goodley et al, 2004, p.p.116-117). Voice-centred relational analysis:

takes the form of a number of distinct readings of the narratives. Four readings

are undertaken: first reading for plot and our responses to the narrative; second,

reading for the voice of 'I'; third, reading for relationships; fourth, placing people

within cultural contexts and social structures ... The focus on voice aims to

transform the act of reading into an act of listening as the reader takes in different

voices and follows them through the narrative.

<div align="right">(Goodley et al, 2004, p.p.117-118)</div>

In Lawthom's use of this approach (Goodley et al, 2004), she ensures 'an emancipatory

stance' is taken by involving Colleen 'in all stages of analysis' with the four readings both

presented to and discussed with Colleen (p.p.118-119). Although my study has adopted a

participatory approach with all participants involved in the construction of their

neonarratives, involvement in the analysis has not been possible. The framework of four

analytical readings, however, is useful for my data analysis and the focus on participant voice

complements the research design as I worked hard throughout the construction of the

neonarratives to maintain participant voice.

There are many variations of voice-centred relational methodology. In 'Silenced Voice in

Literacy', for example, Christine Woodcock (2005) explores the use of the Listening Guide,

'a qualitative, feminist, relational, voice-centered method of analysis', which enabled her to

'hear the complexities' of one adolescent's voice 'and the ways she uniquely made meaning

and understood her life and literacies' (p.47).

Like Woodcock's (2005) interviews with her participant, Tara, the life history interviews in my study 'were unstructured and informal ... which created a discourse that was collaboratively constructed' (p.49) by the participant and myself. Woodcock (2005) explains that the listening guide 'is a qualitative, relational, voice-centered, feminist methodology primarily used in the analysis of interview data' (p.49). The listening guide's 'feminist grounding provides spaces to hear those who have been traditionally silenced', achieved 'through the creation and special analysis of voice poems, and by attending to silences' (Woodcock, 2005, p.49):

> "It is distinctly different from traditional methods of coding, in that one listens to, rather than categorizes or quantifies, the text of the interview ... In other words, listening for an aspect of experience that has been rendered invisible by an oppressive ideology ..." (Tolman, 2001, p.132). "The Listening Guide method provides a way of systematically attending to the many voices embedded in a person's expressed experience ... allow[ing] for multiple codings of the same text" (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch, 2003, p.30).
>
> (Woodcock, 2005, p.49)

In this study, because adults' life history interview data have been reconstructed in the form of biographical neonarratives, I cannot attend to silences in the way that Woodcock's (2005) study does. This aside, I have drawn upon several aspects of voice-relational methodology to inform the analytical framework in this study. I was drawn to the idea of carrying out multiple readings of the neonarratives, particularly as a way to explore the complex and lengthy biographical neonarratives and understand the construction and representation of self

within them. Woodcock (2005) explains the importance of carrying out 'several "listenings" or re-readings of the interview transcript' (p.50) or, in the case of my study, the neonarrative:

> The theory behind the multiple listenings is to allow researchers to truly hear the nuances of informants' stories, and to provide researchers with opportunities to unravel and pay close attention to the important themes and relationships that emerge from the data.
>
> (Woodcock, 2005, p.50)

6.7   The ILP Neonarrative

Previous pages have highlighted the ways in which the neonarrative methodology (Alexander et al, 1992; Stewart 1997; 2008) has been used in this study in the transition from participants' life history interview data to the construction of their biographical narratives. Having drawn on the neonarrative approach in relation to the biographical narratives, this same methodology was also considered useful for understanding and exploring the ILP narrative. In the same way that participants' biographical neonarratives are co-constructed from their life history interview data, ILPs can be understood as neonarratives which are co-constructed within the classroom drawing on different types of data about the learner. Previous pages have discussed the use of neonarrative methodology to reduce and organise the life history interview data and, similarly, the ILP document can also be understood as reducing and organising data about the adult learner. The ILP neonarrative is therefore a particular representation of a number of narratives in the same way that the biographical neonarrative is; the two are simply different neonarratives, constructed in different ways and

for different purposes. Until this point in the thesis, the two narratives of focus in this research have been referred to as the biographical narrative and the ILP narrative. From this point on, the two representations are referred to as biographical neonarrative and ILP neonarrative. Understanding both representations to be neonarratives enabled the development of an analytical framework containing readings which could be applied to both.

6.8   Arriving at an Analytical Framework

In line with Voice Centred Relational methodology, an analytical framework has been developed in this study which entails four readings of the data and which will be applied to both the biographical and the ILP neonarratives. As discussed, both the biographical and ILP narratives of focus in this study are acknowledged as neonarratives, and therefore as the restructuring of narratives about an individual. In each of the cases, however, the restructuring is carried out by different people and for different purposes. This section therefore explains how Reading 1 differs for each of the two neonarratives. Tables are used to illustrate the objectives and relevant concepts underpinning each of the four readings, along with a discussion of each. The readings are as follows:

6.8.1   Biographical Neonarrative: Reading 1

Carried out by	Objectives	Relevant concepts	Details
The participant and	Establish the story, the characters, and the sub plots (Goodley et al, 2004) Listen for plot (Gilligan, 1992)	Domain of activity	Following four life history interviews, a biographical

researcher	Understand the main storylines (Woodcock, 2005) Place myself as researcher in relation to the person (background, history and experiences) (Goodley et al, 2004) Articulate basic trends and themes emerging, in order to hear the general scope of the informant's story (Woodcock, 2005).	Discourse community	neonarrative was constructed from the participant's interview data as detailed in the first part of Chapter 6.

Table 6.2: Biographical Neonarrative, Reading 1

As this table illustrates, the restructuring of participants' life history interview data into neonarratives is acknowledged in this study as a reading of the data. The objective of this first reading is 'to attend to the stories that the informant shares' in order to 'understand the informant's main story lines', 'referred to as "listening for plot" (Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Raider-Roth, 2005)' (Woodcock, 2005, p.50). This first reading of the biographical neonarrative is therefore achieved in the process of its construction, ensuring that I articulated a 'rich synopsis of the basic trends and themes emerging from the first listening, in order to hear the general scope of the informant's story' (Woodcock, 2005, p.50).

6.8.2   ILP neonarrative: Reading 1

The following table illustrates how Reading 1 of the ILP neonarrative differs to the first reading of the biographical neonarrative. In the case of the ILP neonarrative, this first reading is carried out by a number of different people, depending on the provider, but likely to include administrators, tutors and the learners:

Carried out by	Objectives	Relevant concepts	Details
Administrators Tutor(s) Learner	Differ by provider and tutor (see Ch 9)	N/A	Paperwork designed by different members of staff is used to record information about the learner, from initial interview to end of the literacy course (see Chapter 9).

Table 6.3: ILP Neonarrative, Reading 1

The remainder of the framework, outlining Readings 2, 3 and 4, is applied to both the biographical and ILP neonarratives. As the tables below illustrate, the concepts introduced in Chapter 5 have informed this framework in different ways.

6.8.3 Biographical and ILP Neonarratives, Reading 2: Discourse Community Membership

Chapter 5 highlighted how, in the fieldwork stage of the study, the concept of 'discourse community' (Swales, 1990) became considered as an important way of understanding the biographical data, with a distinction emerging between two types: personal and official. Reading 2 is therefore informed by the concept of 'discourse community':

Reading	Objective(s)	Relevant concepts	Questions to ask of the neonarratives
2 **Discourse community**	To establish the discourse community memberships	Discourse community Gee's (2011)	What discourse community memberships are

memberships	referenced within the neonarrative	building task: Identity Dorothy Smith's (2005) Sociology for People	referred to within the neonarrative? Is the type of discourse community significant and, if so, how?

Table 6.4: Biographical and ILP Neonarrative, Reading 2: Discourse Community Membership

6.8.4 Biographical and ILP Neonarratives, Reading 3: Voice

Reading 3 of the two neonarratives focuses on participant voice. Voice relational methodology looks 'for 'I' and how this shifts to 'we' or 'you' when discussing perceptions of experiences' (Goodley et al, 2004, p.118). Goodley et al (2004) explain that tracing 'Colleen's use of the pronouns 'I', 'we' and 'you'' (p.132):

> allows the space between an active 'I' or where 'I' is struggling to say something
>
> to shift to a 'we' or a 'you' ... For Colleen, reading for 'I' was really important in
>
> displaying the tension between what she did, liked, felt proud of and a wider
>
> dominant set of voices about what should be done.
>
> (Goodley et al, 2004, p.132)

This reading therefore focuses on descriptions of self within each neonarrative, along with descriptions of others and how the two compare. Goodley et al (2004) point out that 'this

kind of analytical reading retains the individual (across ambiguous discourses) rather than distributing and reconstructing them across themes (as in thematic analysis) (p.133). Similarly, Woodcock (2005) explains that the focus of her second reading of Tara's data was on how she:

> described herself and her relationships with herself, others, literacy and schooling. Since the voice of self is often expressed as the first person "I", I followed Tara's use of the first-person pronoun by creating what Gilligan et al. (2003) refer to as a voice poem.
>
> (Woodcock, 2005, p.50)

Voice poems or 'I poems' can 'capture concepts not directly stated by the informant, yet central to the meaning of what she has said' (Woodcock, 2005, p.50), and:

> According to Gilligan et al. (2003), two rules manage the construction of an "I poem". First, one is to extract every first person "I" within the given excerpt, along with the verb and any seemingly important accompanying information. Second, one is to maintain the precise sequence in which the phrases originally occurred in the person's story. As the researcher extracts the sequenced "I" phrases, she places them in separate lines, like the lines of a poem.
>
> (Woodcock, 2005, p.50)

I became interested in the usefulness of the 'I poem' in this study and, after spending some time constructing I poems from the data, decided to use this method as I found them to provide both powerful insights into and illustrations of the data. My application of the voice

poem approach differs to Woodcock's (2005) above description because the construction of participant interview data into a neonarrative makes it impossible to 'maintain the precise sequence in which the phrases originally occurred' (p.50) within the interviews. As the neonarrative represents a co-constructed narrative, however, the sequence is not of importance.

Voice relational methodology explores 'the way in which respondents speak about interpersonal relationships with other people and broader social networks', examining 'connections, autonomy and dependence' (Goodley et al, 2004, p.118).

By focusing on the voice of the self, Reading 3 therefore explores not only how participants describe themselves in the first person, but also how they describe themselves in relation to others:

Reading	Objective(s)	Relevant concepts	Questions to ask of the neonarratives
3 **Voice**	To explore how the participant is described (including by herself, Woodcock, 2005) and her relationships with others	Gee's (2011) building tasks: Identity Social goods Gee's (2011) tools of inquiry: Discourse Dorothy Smith's (2005) Sociology for People	What identities are being valued within the neonarrative? Is this different depending upon the discourse community and, if so, how?

Table 6.5: Biographical and ILP Neonarrative, Reading 3: Voice

6.8.5 Biographical and ILP Neonarratives, Reading 4: Conversations

As discussed in Chapter 5, an exploration of literature concerned with different ways of knowing informed the way in which I came to conceive of personal and official discourse communities and influenced the development of this analytical framework. I came to understand participants' references to types of knowledge and ways of knowing in relation to one of Gee's (2011) tools of inquiry: as representative of a Big "C" Conversation, that is to say that their references to knowledge could be understood as representative of:

> [a debate] in society or within specific social groups (over focused issues like
>
> smoking, abortion, or school reform) that large numbers of people recognize, both
>
> in terms of what "sides" there are to take in such debates and what sorts of people
>
> tend to be on each side.

<div align="right">(Gee, 2011, p.201)</div>

The fourth and final reading of the data therefore draws on Gee's (2011) concept of 'Big "C" Conversation' to explore the Conversations being referred to within each type of neonarrative, what sides are being taken and valued, and by whom:

Reading	Objective(s)	Relevant concepts	Questions to ask of the neonarratives
4 **Conversations**	To establish the Conversations (the debates in society) that feature in the neonarrative	Gee's (2011) tool of inquiry: 'Big "C" Conversations' Intertextuality. Dorothy Smith's (2005) Sociology	What are the Conversations being referred to, what sides are being taken and by whom? Which sides of the

		for People Gee's (2011) building tasks: Knowledge Social goods Identity	Conversations are being valued? (E.g. what knowledge / ways of knowing are being referred to and how are they valued within the neonarrative?) What other texts are being alluded to or related to and what is the significance of this?

Table 6.6: Biographical and ILP Neonarrative, Reading 4: Conversations

6.9   Chapter summary

Mauthner and Doucet (1997) believe that, although it 'has received increasing attention over recent years', qualitative data analysis 'is still largely neglected' 'compared to other stages of the research process' (p.p.119-120). Their paper therefore details 'the 'nitty-gritty'' of how they used the voice-centred relational method to analyse data from their respective doctoral research projects, 'a study of women's experiences of motherhood and postnatal depression' and 'a study of heterosexual couples attempting to share housework and childcare' (p.119). Like Mauthner and Doucet (1997), I have also 'faced the task of having to make sense of the enormous amounts of data' gathered for my doctoral research (p.120). Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis have attempted to detail the 'nitty-gritty' of how an analytical framework was arrived at in this study. Chapter 5 accounted for the emergence of significant concepts in the fieldwork stages, while this chapter has detailed the stages involved in the transition from interview data to biographical neonarrative, arriving at a final analytical framework

consisting of multiple readings that can be used to explore the biographical and ILP neonarratives of each of the twelve participants in this study. The following chapter will now presents the first set of findings from this study, focusing on participants' memberships of both personal and official discourse communities, as represented in their biographical neonarratives.

Chapter 7: Personal and official discourse community memberships:

Importance, perceptions and responses within the biographical neonarrative

7.1   Introduction

The distinction between personal and official discourse communities has been detailed in Chapter 5. This chapter presents the first set of findings from this study which focuses on participants' memberships of both personal and official discourse communities, as represented in their biographical neonarratives. The first section of the chapter focuses on the ways in which participants chose to approach the four interview tasks, illustrating the importance they place on their personal discourse community memberships. Having established the importance of personal discourse community memberships within the biographical neonarratives, the second part of the chapter explores participants' perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships within their biographical neonarratives. Drawing on concepts of gender and identity, reasons for the importance of personal discourse community memberships and perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships are explored in detail in the following chapter.

7.2 The importance of personal discourse communities within the biographical neonarrative

Within the life history interviews and consequently the biographical neonarratives, much importance is attributed to participants' memberships of personal discourse communities. As detailed in Chapter 4, the life history interviews were structured around four tasks: question cards; mind-maps; personal writing; and personal items. As previously discussed, the use of tasks, as opposed to questions, to provide structure to these conversations enabled participants to focus on the areas of their lives and life histories that were most important to them. The ways in which participants chose to approach the tasks are therefore important.

7.2.1 Interview 1: question cards

The importance of participants' memberships within personal discourse communities first became evident in Interview 1 when they were invited to select question cards. Each participant was given a small box containing 60 question cards (please see Appendix 13 for a list of all questions contained in the box). The task was to select question cards from the box that they wished to answer. Participants were given a few minutes to look through the cards and could select as many or as few cards as they wished. Following the selection of cards, a discussion then began by participants answering the questions in any order they chose. Appendix 14 illustrates the questions selected by each of the twelve participants, listed in the order in which participants chose to discuss them. One participant, Lexi, randomly cut the pack of cards to choose her question cards, while I selected Suzanne's cards for her. The remaining ten participants spent time considering their choice of cards and dictated the order

in which they were discussed, and the following discussion therefore focuses on the question choices of these ten participants.

Of the sixty cards to choose from, twenty eight were selected in total across the ten participants, with the majority of selected questions relating directly to personal discourse community membership. Six of the ten participants, for example, selected the question 'What is your favourite thing about Christmas?', with all answers focusing on close personal relationships within the personal discourse communities of families and friendships. While a number of questions were addressed in other participants' initial interviews, this discussion lasted the duration of Anne's first interview. In answering this question, Anne chose to focus on her family, including the difficult subject of the death of her first baby:

> Well all the family getting together and the kids getting up in the morning and seeing their faces. Opening their presents. I think that's the important thing about Christmas, kids and all the family getting together … I have had another child, Dean. I think it's nice to think of him. I think of him more at Christmas …
>
> (Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.9)

For Jalisa, this question was also an opportunity to talk at length about life with her disabled daughter and the invaluable support she receives from her closest friend. Michal and Sandy also answered this question in relation to their families, providing detailed insights into their closest personal relationships. Emily's discussion of Christmas provided her with an opportunity to talk about her son who died in a car accident, a key event in her life but one that is rarely revisited throughout the life history interviews. For Isla, too, the topic of

Christmas enabled her to discuss the difficult changes in her family and relationships since separating from her husband:

> I love Christmas time again because it's the one and only time that we used to spend time as a family ... it was always like a tradition that we'd decorate [the tree], we'd put the music on, we'd have a mince pie, we'd dance around, you know ... I will miss all that, but that would go anyway because they're older now, aren't they? And they've got to make their own little traditions, haven't they?
>
> (Isla, Biographical Neonarrative, p.6)

The question, 'If you were flooded, what would you save, apart from your family and friends?', was selected by Sandy and Isla, with both discussing the importance of their dogs. Isla's answer also explained the importance of her photographs of the children:

> Photographs, *definitely*. Back to the kids again, I took a long time making scrap books for them all. Well, you get your baby albums, don't you, and make a few brief notes and think, 'I'll get back to that'. And then I did a scrap book from when we were engaged actually. I'd kept loads of stuff, all our engagement cards and every posting we'd been on and everything, certain things that reminded me of wherever we'd been. And they were looking a bit dog-eared so about four years ago I got into scrap-booking, like on QVC, you know? They do it with all the interesting memory things. So I did four books for the kids, and it took me for*ever* to do them, so I would definitely save them! (*laughs*)
>
> (Isla, Biographical Neonarrative, p.5)

Michal's selection of 'What is your favourite view?' led to a discussion about his family in Slovakia, and provided Alice with an opportunity to discuss memories of holidays with family and friends. The question 'What is your favourite website or BLOG?' also led Michal and Molly to discuss the social network website Facebook. Both Michal and Molly cite Facebook as their favourite website and were introduced to it by friends:

> A few friends texted me: 'Join Facebook' … And then I registered and got on with six friends for a while and now it's three hundred and thirty something … There's plenty of people that I thought I'm never going to find or have contact from them. I knew only her name, or his name, and I put it there and 'Oh there it is!' and it's really nice … It's everybody really.
>
> (Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.4)

Similarly, Molly explains:

> It was my friend [who introduced me to Facebook] because she said a friend of hers had gone on Facebook and she met her partner on there, her current partner ... When the kids are in bed, 'Oh I'll just see what everybody's up to on Facebook' ... you can keep in touch with, get in touch with people you haven't been in touch with for years. And I thought, 'I fancy the idea of that' ... I've got in touch with a few old school friends that I used to go to school with, so it's quite nice and people I used to work with.
>
> (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.8)

Louise's choice of the question 'What do you wish you had known ten years ago?' within the first few minutes of her first interview prompted a discussion about some of the difficult relationships she had experienced within her personal discourse communities and the significance of these experiences in her life history stories:

> Well, that relationships aren't easy! (*laughs*) ... not just in a relationship with a man but that some relationships can be quite difficult depending on the person. Relationships with adults can be quite difficult when you compare them to relationships with children. You find that a relationship with a child, that you have in a school, can be a lot easier from a relationship you have with an adult ... I think as you get older you realise that there may be some people, older people in my life, who have maybe taken advantage and I've not seen it before. I've let them behave that way to me and take advantage of me, whereas now I think, 'No, you're not going to hurt me anymore. You're not going to treat me like that. I'm not going to have that anymore'.
>
> (Louise, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.1-2)

The question 'Who, not necessarily still alive, would you most like to sit next to on a long-haul flight?' prompted two participants to discuss loved ones they had lost, in Beth's case her mum and, for Sandy, her dad. Participants' choice of question cards therefore illustrate the importance placed by all upon their memberships within personal discourse communities, and the relationships these entail.

While some questions appear to relate to official discourse communities, such as employment, when answered by participants they instead led to discussions about family,

relationships and other personal discourse communities. Rather than prompting a discussion about employment, for instance, Louise's selected questions, 'What was your first student or holiday job?' and 'What did you want to be when you grew up?' led to more personal discussions. In her teens, for example, she worked in a shoe shop and this topic linked to her goal of working with children which, in turn, relates to the difficult relationships she has experienced within her personal discourse communities over the years:

> I've always wanted to work with children ... and I couldn't think of anything else
> to do. Nothing better to do. It's just what I love doing. You get so much from it
> and they're really, you know, I think they give you so much as well back ... if
> you're having an off day they'll always come up to you and ask if you're OK.
>
> (Louise, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.27-28)

Participants' choices of question cards in the initial life history interviews are therefore important in understanding the significance placed upon their memberships within personal discourse communities, and the relationships that result from these memberships.

7.2.2 Interview 2: mind-maps

Of the twelve research participants, only Anne chose not to bring a mind-map to Interview 2. The remaining eleven participants each brought a mind-map to the second interview, with each containing references to both personal and official discourse communities. The significance of participants' memberships within official discourse communities, however, can only be fully understood in relation to their personal discourse community memberships.

This is illustrated in this section through reference to one participant's mind-map, that of Lexi. Lexi's mind-map, below, contains references to a number of personal and official discourse communities, from family and friends – which she labels her 'support network' – to education, voluntary work and passing her driving test:
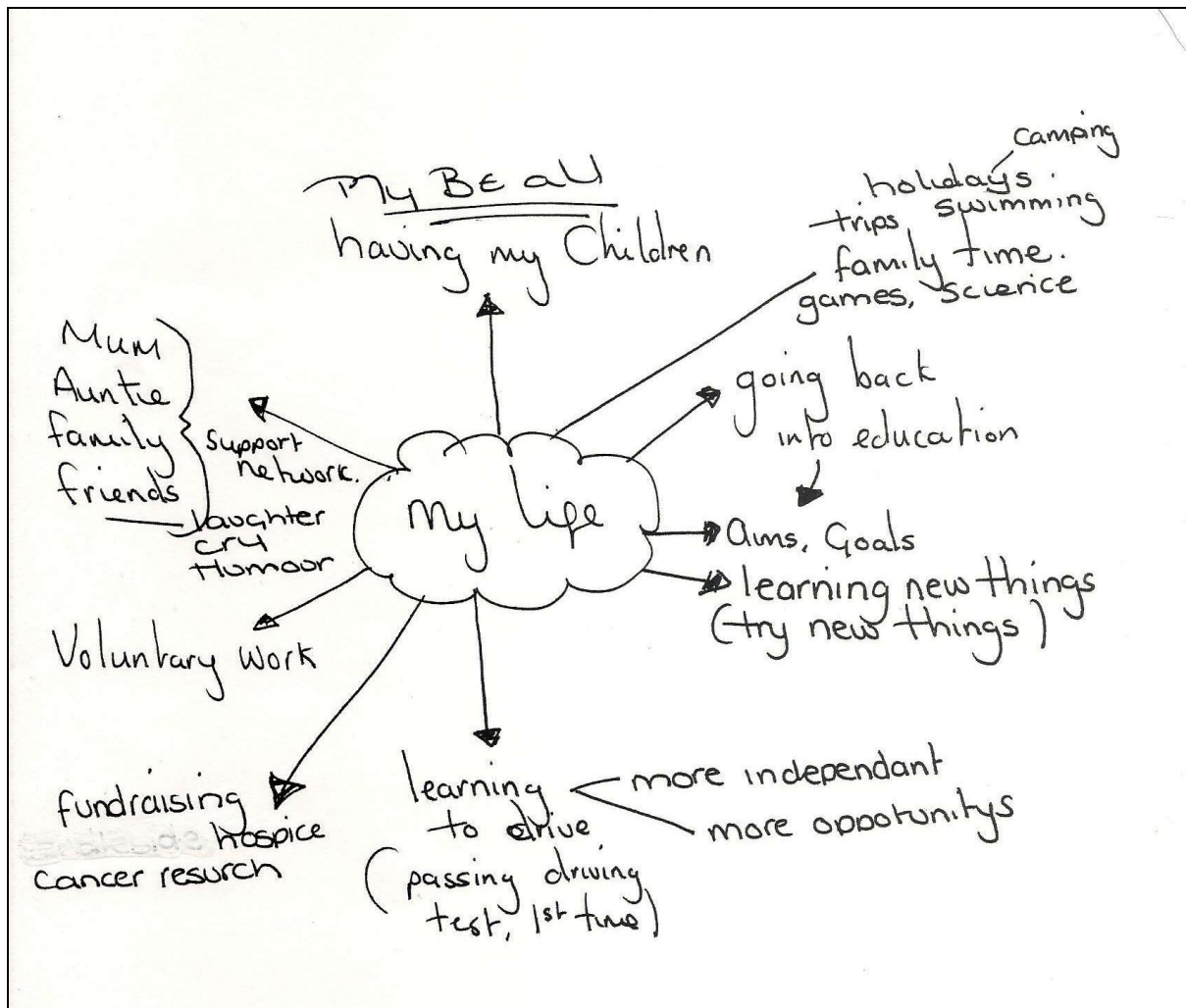
Figure 7.1: Lexi's mind-map (Biographical Neonarrative, p.6)

The way in which Lexi introduces her mind-map is indicative of the dominance of personal discourse community memberships within her biographical neonarrative:

> Well obviously my children are everything. Before I had my kids, all this (*indicates mind-map*) were different. So this is all since I've had my kids, 'cause obviously everything changes, doesn't it? Like I had all my expectations and goals and aims and everything *before*, but now I've got my children they're totally different. Totally different. So, what do I do with my kids? The boys

love camping, love camping. We go up to the Lakes more or less every year. We

do lots and lots of camping holidays, lots of trips.

<div align="right">(Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.6)</div>

The importance of the references within Lexi's mind-map to official discourse community

membership such as 'voluntary work', 'learning to drive' and 'going back into education' all

in fact relate to her personal discourse community memberships. Lexi's involvement in

fundraising for a local hospice, for example, is rooted in her personal discourse community

membership as she lost her aunty to cervical cancer two years ago. Lexi also explains that

passing her driving test was important to her as she 'had to give up the driving lessons' when

pregnant with her first son. The significance of returning to education is also related to her

personal discourse community memberships in a number of ways. After having her first son,

Lexi returned to college to give her something else to do:

I was sick of talking baby language! (*laughs*) I needed somebody right to talk to!

Like 'goo goo' and singing songs all the time, it's just like 'NO!' I needed to get

out … I'd like to do youth offending … Originally it just started after I had Alfie

and I just wanted a bit of a hobby, so that's how it started.

<div align="right">(Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.15)</div>

As will be discussed later in this chapter, Lexi's interest in working with young offenders is

also related to her own relationship with her brother. Later, in interview 3, it became

apparent that Lexi's return to education is also important to her because, as a teenager, she

had difficulty succeeding at school because of the domestic violence that took place between

her mum and dad. As a result of relocating to a safe house, Lexi went to 'three different

primary schools and three different high schools' and there was no continuity in her schooling.

> … it's a wonder I can write! (*laughs*) … the only [exam] I failed was French. Because I'd done Spanish in one school, German in another and then French in another … and some things - we were going over things that I'd already done at one school and then they were going back on things that I hadn't done.

> (Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.30-31)

7.2.3   Interview 3: personal writing

As with the previous interview tasks, the personal writing task in Interview 3 enabled participants to discuss any subject they wished. Some participants, such as Suzanne, chose to develop the mind-map from Interview 2 into a piece of writing, where other people, including Jalisa, Isla and Emily, took the opportunity to discuss aspects of their lives which had not yet been explored in the previous two meetings. Of the twelve participants, three– Anne, Michal and Beth - chose not to bring any personal writing to Interview 3. The following discussion therefore relates to the personal writing of the remaining nine participants.

Like the question cards and mind-maps of the previous two interviews, participants used the personal writing task to focus on their memberships and relationships within personal discourse communities. Lexi and Emily each chose to write about their own childhoods and family relationships, with Emily discussing her memories of growing up on a farm -

including the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in 1967-1968 - and Lexi focusing on domestic abuse:

> I just thought I'd go a bit further back before having my kids. Because everything I've spoken about has been *since* having my kids so I thought I'll just talk a little bit about *before*.
>
> (Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.26)

Louise wrote about a special weekend spent with her former boyfriend, Tom, while Sandy wrote about meeting her husband and their family life together. Molly wrote about friendships and Alice about family holidays, while Jalisa chose to narrate the period of time in which she found out she was pregnant and decided to keep her baby. Even passing her driving test is narrated by Isla to be of significance only in relation to her family discourse community. The exception appears to be Suzanne, who presented a short personal story which begins with being very happy at primary school, to being bullied and self-harming at high school, to having her son and finding happiness. The significance of educational discourse community memberships, including school, is explored in detail later in this chapter.

When discussing the personal writing task, all participants indicated that they had been concerned with what to write about, rather than the task of writing itself or, to draw on Mace's (2002) distinction between two separate writing activities, participants were concerned with the 'composition' as opposed to the 'transcription' of their personal writing (p.53). The concerns surrounding what to write about led many participants to talk to relatives or friends before producing a piece of writing to bring along to interview 3:

I didn't *mind* writing it but I was very careful at what I wrote.

So you were more bothered about *what* you wrote -

Than *how* I was going to write it, yeah. I wasn't really bothered about writing it.
I did think at first, because that was what I wanted to write about, but then I was
thinking 'What else can I write about?' ... when I spoke to Isla and Sarah they
said, 'No, just stay with that. Go with that'. But I'm glad that I've done it now,
I'm glad that I made my mind up to do it. It's quite nice to write things like that
because you don't ever get to write things like that. *I* write things like that, you
know sometimes when you've got things going on in your head. When I split up
from Tom I used to write about how I was feeling because people always say it's
good to write it down. You can talk about it but it's good to write it down. I'd
write it down in letter form but I'd never send it. And it's funny because I've got
them on [the laptop] and looked back at them last night and I was thinking, 'Oh
my goodness!' (*laughs*) I can't show it you but oh my goodness! And I must
have been sad at that time.

<div align="right">(Louise, Biographical Neonarrative, p.53)</div>

I just wasn't sure what to tell you ... you rattle on about your children and other
people perhaps think, 'Oh, she's off again, about the kids', you know? And you
go on about work forever. But when I was talking to Rachel [my daughter] about
this the other day I thought, 'Yes!' because it's different and it's funny and it's

just light hearted rather than just waffling on about things that have gone on in your life that are perhaps not so good.

<div align="right">(Alice, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.51-52)</div>

Like Alice, Molly also talks about wanting her personal writing to focus on positive aspects of her life:

... I thought, 'How can I fill an A4?' Because there's nothing I can say one event in my life would take up a whole A4 sheet and I couldn't think so I've done little bits of my different friends. I thought, well, I'll talk about my friends and how they make me laugh. I thought, I daren't drone on because you can go on and on.

<div align="right">(Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.19)</div>

As this section illustrates, participants gave much consideration to what they would write about and, as with the tasks in Interviews 1 and 2, used it as an opportunity to talk about important relationships and experiences within their most valued personal discourse communities.

7.2.4   Interview 4: personal items

Like the personal writing in Interview 3, the majority of items brought along to the final interview are related to participants' memberships within their personal discourse communities. Ten of the eleven women in this study are mothers. Lexi, a single parent, brought along a Father's Day card and Thank You card made for her by each of her sons.

Isla brought along a Mother's Day present and two Mother's Day cards made for her by her daughter, Vicky, 'when she thought I was the best mum in the world' (Isla's Biographical Neonarrative, p.26). Sandy also brought along two Mother's Day presents bought for her by her daughters. Discussing one of the gifts, Sandy says:

> … I can remember her giving it me on Mother's Day saying, 'Mummy, I got this all for you on my own' … I've got a cabinet in my living room that's got glass fronted doors on it so it's in the middle of one of my shelves there with other little like candles that they've made, you know, when we've been out. Sort of a special little shelf for anything *they've* made.
>
> (Sandy, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.15-16)

Similarly, Anne brought a bear ornament, a gift to her daughter on her recent confirmation; Jalisa brought a pebble given to her by her daughter; Beth discussed her son's football trophy; and Molly brought a shoe worn by her daughter when she was a bridesmaid for a close friend. Louise also brought a pebble given to her by her former boyfriend, Tom's, daughter.

Many participants chose to bring items along which represented their own childhoods. For Suzanne these were a cross, which had been a gift from her sister and which she explains has got her through some difficult times, along with a teddy bear - the only two items she has from her own childhood. Sandy brought along swimming awards she had achieved as a teenager, while Molly brought a cushion which had been a gift to her on her 21st birthday. Participants also brought items of jewellery which represent close relationships, including

Beth who talked about her wedding ring and Louise who discussed a bracelet, a gift from her ex-boyfriend.

Along with items such as those outlined above, many participants also brought photographs to Interview 4. Rather than personal items, for example, Alice chose instead to bring along photograph albums and discussed her family. Emily brought photographs taken on holiday with her husband, along with a picture of her dad holding her as a baby and photos related to her personal writing about the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in the sixties. Molly also brought along a family holiday photograph, taken since her divorce:

> That was the first holiday that we went away together since being divorced and I thought, 'Oh, how are we going to get on?' but we got on *really* well, we did. It was really fantastic.
>
> (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.21)

Along with photographs, other important literacy artefacts were brought to the final interviews. Lexi, for example, brought a Halloween party invitation, and discussed how she is involved each year in organising the local Halloween party for friends and their children, along with a concert ticket to see Pink, which she explains represents friendship. Similarly, Louise discussed a Robot Wars poster, an event she had been involved in organising. Isla brought two CDs: a Christmas CD listened to by her family for a number of years which represents the family that, at the time, she felt she was losing because of her divorce; and an album she had been listening to when making her decision to leave her husband, which she describes as the soundtrack to the 'new me'. Each of the personal items and vernacular

literacies discussed above therefore symbolises important relationships and memories within participants' own personal discourse communities, past and present.

Participants also brought along personal items which relate to official discourse communities. However, as discussed in relation to the question cards in Interview 1, the significance of these items is in fact rooted in experiences within their personal discourse communities. Michal, for example, brought along his bible and discussed how, although he had received it several years ago on his confirmation, it has only recently come to be important to him:

> I've had it fifteen, sixteen years maybe and I didn't use it. My brother had it and eventually he got his own bible so it was just in the drawer. My brother sent me the bible and a few more books, here to England, when I had a really bad time when I broke up with my girlfriend and stuff … It's like all your life process, just studying it. I read the New Testament once and I'm now reading it a second time. I discovered more and other things that I didn't realise before. And now, people in church here, they are Christians some of them for forty years and they are still finding something out, something different, you know? It's a whole life process.
>
> (Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.9-10)

Michal's biographical neonarrative reveals how he has struggled to come to terms with the death of his mother when he was a teenager, along with the subsequent changes in the personal discourse of his family. Through his newly found faith in God, he explains that everything is now 'completely different':

I've changed everything because, I don't know how English say it, when you believe in God or something like that, it was born again. So that happened and now I'm completely fine with everything. I believe that, what's it called, I'm not frightened or scared by stuff because I believe in God and I hope that he helps me and I pray and everything. So I'm fine actually … now I'm believing I can meet with mum again, so it's a good time for me now.

(Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.2-11)

Beth and Jalisa each brought items which represented recent educational achievements, with Beth discussing her Entry Level 3 Literacy certificates and Jalisa her Level 2 Art work. Beth and Jalisa's pride in their educational achievements is fully understood only in the context of their own childhoods. Due to illness as a teenager, Jalisa did not take any exams and explains how she is enjoying discovering her creative side in her Art course, 'something else I was proud of as well' (Jalisa's biographical neonarrative, p.12). Similarly, Beth's pride in the achievement of her Entry Level 3 Adult Literacy qualification is rooted in her experiences as a child:

Well, I've got my certificates there to show you. You know you said for me to show you things that mean a lot to me, well they're there and I am so proud of those because they're the only things I feel I've ever achieved. They're physical those. I've got them out. City and Guilds they are. I've achieved both of those which I'm very proud of.

(Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.34)

The first section of this chapter therefore illustrates the importance placed by participants on their personal discourse community memberships, and suggests that participants' official discourse community memberships are informed by their personal discourse community memberships.

7.3 Perceptions of and responses to discourse community memberships within the biographical neonarrative

This chapter has so far illustrated that the way in which participants approached the interview tasks highlights the importance they place on their memberships of personal discourse communities. These personal discourse communities – namely family and friendship groups – represent the sites in which participants' most valued relationships, and often their most important life events, are to be found. As illustrated, personal discourse communities are also the locations of many of the most difficult relationships and life events experienced by participants throughout their lives. Although personal discourse communities receive greater importance within the biographical neonarratives, participants have not lived their lives to date by participating in only personal discourse communities and their personal discourse community memberships are not therefore isolated from official discourse communities. Indeed, data suggest that there are varying degrees of interplay between personal and official discourse communities. While participant responses to interview tasks illustrate the importance of their personal discourse community memberships, analyses of the twelve neonarratives also suggest that participants negotiate memberships within many different

personal and official discourse communities throughout their lives, and that these often overlap and inform one other.

Having established the importance placed by participants upon their personal discourse community memberships, data analysis also encompassed references to official discourse community membership within the biographical neonarratives (see Reading 1 in Chapter 6). Focusing on both personal and official discourse communities reveals two key findings regarding participants' memberships within discourse communities:

1. There are different perceptions of the ways in which membership within discourse communities might affect participants' memberships within their most valued personal discourse communities;

2. Participants respond to discourse community memberships in different ways, with their responses being informed by the perceptions addressed in Key Finding 1.

Key Finding 1: Memberships within discourse communities are perceived of in different ways

Data analysis suggests that participants' responses to official discourse community memberships are informed by their perceptions of how this affects their most valued personal discourse community memberships. Analysis of the twelve biographical neonarratives reveals three ways in which participants perceive of memberships within discourse communities:

- as supporting or complementing their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

- as compensating for their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

- as threatening their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

Key Finding 2: Perceptions of discourse community memberships inform participant responses to membership opportunities

Participants' biographical neonarratives illustrate how, throughout their lives, they have opportunities to become members within a number of discourse communities but that, importantly, their perceptions of these community memberships inform how they respond to these opportunities. Data analysis suggests that participants respond in the following two ways:

- By welcoming memberships
- By rejecting memberships

The concepts of perceptions and responses are evident in empirical literature, in particular the notions of threat and rejection. Discussing his experiences of education, for example, Rose (1989) says 'at first sign of doing rather than memorizing, I would automatically assume the problem was beyond me and distance myself from it' (p.43), illustrating a perception of threat and a response of rejection. Similarly, Meyer (2010) discusses how the participants in his classroom-based research initially perceived of his writing project as threatening, responding with varying degrees of rejection:

> The first round of writing was both powerful and exhausting for me as a researcher and teacher ... the children's lack of trust in each other and in me, as evidenced by their unwillingness to read their pieces, was isolating.
>
> (Meyer, 2010, p.28)

In her introduction, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains how, 'From the vantage point of the colonized', the word 'research' is regarded as a threat because of its '[inextricable link] to European imperialism and colonialism' (p.1):

> The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful.
>
> (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p.1)

Drawing on the concept of discourse community, and in particular discourse community membership, this chapter now explores the different perceptions of and responses to discourse community membership as represented in participants' biographical neonarratives.

7.4   A focus on perceptions of and responses to membership within official discourse communities

The three different perceptions of discourse community membership apply to both personal and official discourse communities. There are many examples in the data, for instance, of

personal discourse community memberships being perceived of as threatening towards a participant's most valued personal discourse community membership. The two different responses to discourse community membership are also relevant to both personal and official discourse community memberships. There are many instances in the biographical neonarratives, for example, where friendships are rejected because of their perceived threat to a participant's most valued discourse community. In the remaining pages of this chapter, however, the focus of the discussion is on participants' perceptions of and responses to memberships within *official* discourse communities. The biographical neonarratives contain references to a range of official discourse communities associated with the following domains of social life: Employment, Education, Health, Religion and Law. The following pages focus on findings relating to participants' memberships within employment and education-related discourse communities.

7.4.1 Employment

At some stage in their lives, all twelve participants have been members of employment-related discourse communities. At the time of taking part in the study, six of the seven adults enrolled on employer-responsive literacy provision were in employment: Beth as a home carer; Louise and Isla as teaching assistants in a primary school; Sandy as a midday assistant in a primary school; and Alice and Molly as school catering supervisors. The seventh participant enrolled on an employer-responsive course, Emily, was also a school catering supervisor at the time she started the course and, by Interview 1, had very recently retired. Of the five adults undertaking adult-responsive provision, one was in employment at the time of

participation in the study – Michal – working in a munitions factory 'running the machines and checking parts' (Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.26).

For all twelve, employment – whether past or present – is an important part of their biographical neonarratives although, as the following pages will illustrate, perceptions of and responses to these community memberships vary greatly. Emily's biographical neonarrative, for example, reveals a very rich employment history and the following quote in which Emily discusses her first job is suggestive of the importance she places on these memberships:

> I went to work for [a computer company]. That was a *big* company ... Six years
> [I stayed there] and I worked my way up there. I was my own boss there. I had a
> staff of six when I was 19. I cooked directors only, I had the best end. I had two
> dining rooms.
>
> (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.38)

As a child, Emily grew up on a farm and she talks with fondness of her memories of her early childhood helping her dad on the farm. Upon retirement, Emily was invited to become a guide on a local farm, responsible for showing 'the children round and telling them about the milking' (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.1). In these particular examples, Emily perceives employment-related discourse community membership to be supportive of her family discourse community membership. Although Emily's parents are deceased, the close family discourse community of Emily and her two parents remains an important part of Emily's life, particularly as Emily and her husband still live in the family farmhouse. The job as a farm guide not only complements her childhood experiences of growing up on a farm and helping her dad with various tasks; it also enables her to remain a member of an

employment-related discourse community following her retirement. Discussing keeping busy in her retirement, Emily says 'I was brought up to it, you see. You were never allowed to idle about' (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.50).

Like Emily, membership of a workplace discourse community is an important aspect of Louise's life and Louise describes her job as 'one of the most important things in my life' (p.5). Prior to taking part in the study, Louise experienced six months of unemployment, which she describes as a 'miserable' time in her life (p.28). Louise eventually got a job as a teaching assistant and explains that 'I always wanted to work with children from when I was fifteen' (p.27). For Emily, then, employment is perceived as supportive and complementary of particular aspects of her family discourse community membership. For Louise, however, this membership is instead perceived of as compensating for her lack of family relationships, particularly with her mum. Having experienced some difficult relationships with both family members and friends, Louise explains that, although it may be lost through unemployment, her membership within the discourse community of the school is not one that can be lost through the breakdown of relationships:

> I know it's probably a silly thing but my family aren't very close and my upbringing was very, you know. I don't really see my dad and so I just love [my job]. I can't explain it. They make me laugh and they make me happy ... So to go to work every day and have that in my life and it's not through a relationship that could break down. They would never, I can't see the children ever making me unhappy.
>
> (Louise, Biographical Neonarrative, p.32)

Similarly, for Isla, membership of a workplace discourse community has compensated for her troubled family discourse community membership during a very difficult divorce, with Isla saying 'work's the only thing that's kept me going' (p.36). For Michal, coming to the UK and getting a job compensates for a perceived lack of status within his own family discourse community, as he left university two years into a five year Maths degree when every other member of his family has 'a minimum of one' degree (p.19). Analysis of Lexi's biographical neonarrative suggests that, for her too, membership of a workplace community in which she can work with young offenders is perceived of as compensating in some ways for the difficulties experienced in her own family:

> My elder brother, he's only eighteen months older than me but, well, he's a persistent offender. He's spent most of his life in prison ... he comes out and he comes out with all the determination to be OK and then he doesn't know how to handle outside ... We'll all be scared. We'll be watching him when he gets out ... we'll all be wondering at night, like me and mum will have secret phone calls, 'Oh, I wonder where he is. What's he doing? Who's he with?'
>
> (Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.23-25)

Within the twelve biographical neonarratives, however, it is evident that memberships within employment-related discourse communities are not always perceived of as supportive or compensatory of their most valued personal discourse community memberships. Of the eleven women to participate in the study, ten are mothers and, importantly, at some point in their lives, membership of work-related discourse communities has been perceived of by all ten as a threat to their family discourse community memberships and, more specifically, to their roles as mothers. Molly explains that, although she would have preferred not to, she

returned to work after having her first child. The following excerpt from Molly's biographical neonarrative highlights her feelings about what she missed out on as a result of returning to work:

> ... I missed a lot with my eldest, because I missed his first steps, his first words. I think they're important, to *be* there ... I remember my mother-in-law diving into the shop saying, 'Oh, Ben has taken his first steps'. I was gutted!
>
> (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.29-30)

Examples of perceptions of threat can also be found in the biographical neonarratives of Beth (p.28), Anne (p.7), Jalisa (p.6) and Lexi (p.19). Findings show that, having perceived of it as a threat, participants rejected their memberships within workplace discourse communities in different ways and by varying degrees. Many of the mums, for example, rejected their memberships within employment-related discourse communities by leaving their jobs and opting to stay at home to raise their children. The following excerpt from Lexi's biographical neonarrative is representative of many participants' reasons for such rejection:

> I got pregnant with Alfie, had my maternity leave, went back but I was starting work [in the factory] at like 4 or 5 o' clock in the morning. So I was getting up with him in the night and then when I was coming home after work, my mum had done everything for him and I was like, well, I didn't like it. I didn't like it because he were ready for bed by the time I got home ... it was like, 'He's mine'.
>
> (Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.19)

Other mums welcomed certain memberships within workplace discourse communities but rejected opportunities for new memberships in the workplace. Alice, for example, has avoided any opportunities for promotion in the workplace until very recently when she felt her children were all old enough (p.47). Molly (p.30) and Isla (p.28) took part-time jobs as cleaners and care assistants while their children were young to accommodate the needs of their families. Participants' biographical neonarratives therefore illustrate how, at different times in their lives, memberships within workplace discourse communities have been perceived of and responded to in different ways.

7.4.2 Education

As with employment-related discourse community memberships, participants' biographical neonarratives also contain many references to memberships within educational discourse communities. The previous section of this chapter has already made reference to how losing membership within an educational community was perceived of as threatening to Michal's family discourse community membership, prompting him to compensate for this by moving to the UK to find a job. In Jalisa's family discourse community, however, it is educational discourse community memberships, as opposed to lack of, which are perceived of as threatening. Although she enjoyed school, Jalisa explains why she left school without any O'levels:

> I was ill leading up to it so I were meant to get work coming in but my mum
> never went and picked it up from the school so I couldn't ... I kept saying to my
> mum, 'Will you go and pick the work up?' and she never did. She said she didn't

have time 'cause she were working ... My mum always used to say to me when I

said, 'Oh I want a degree in English', she'd say, 'Don't be so stupid. That's not

going to get you anywhere' ... 'You'll end up in a factory anyway' and 'Stop

being a snob' type-thing.

<div align="right">(Jalisa, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.12-15)</div>

Many years later, Jalisa returned to education but, once again, perceived of her membership

in an education discourse community as threatening to her family discourse community:

My mother's been really poorly and the housework hasn't been getting done so

that's been getting on top of me. So I've had to give up college. I don't know if

I'm going to be able to start up again next year ... I'm a bit upset about that. It

just got too much for me ...

<div align="right">(Jalisa, Biographical Neonarrative, p.18)</div>

For both Beth and Suzanne, their stories of bullying at school illustrate the ways in which

their memberships of school discourse communities were perceived of as threatening to their

respective personal discourse communities. Being one of 14 children, as a young child Beth

was concerned about protecting her mum from any unnecessary worry which her experiences

of bullying might cause. Beth explains:

I wouldn't tell her [about the bullying at school] because she had too many of us

to look after ... 'Everything alright?' 'Yeah, fine. I'm OK'. But I'd think to

myself, 'Yeah, I'm fine because I'm home now'.

<div align="right">(Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.22-23)</div>

Suzanne's membership of a school discourse community was also perceived of by both Suzanne and her mum as a threat towards her family discourse community membership. Suzanne explains:

> You had to do loads of tests when you started and then you got your sets, and I weren't in any with any of my friends ... I just weren't given a chance, at all, and I knew I could do it and it was just so frustrating,
>
> (Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.15)

In Year 9, Suzanne was placed in bottom sets again 'for everything' (p.16) and was bullied by a girl in her classes. Suzanne rejected this official discourse community membership by skiving school and getting drunk at friends' houses (p.16):

> They used to ring my mum up and she'd say, 'My Suzanne wouldn't do that' and I'd say, 'Well, I did'. And she just got fed up and she just didn't go to parents' evenings in the end 'cause she was sick of what they said … she didn't go mad, she just didn't go to them anymore.
>
> (Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.17)

Importantly, this example suggests that it is not only the research participants who perceive of and respond to discourse community memberships in particular ways. In the above example, for instance, Suzanne's mum can be understood as rejecting her own membership of the school discourse community by refusing to attend any further parents' evenings and by

eventually withdrawing her daughter from school altogether. Aged ten, Beth went to great extremes to reject her own school discourse community membership:

> I went into myself, and every day I'd say to the teacher, 'I've got tummy ache, I've got tummy ache' so when you had tummy ache or a headache or whatever, they'd send you to the nurse's room, where you could lie down. So I'd lie on the bed and pretend I had tummy ache, but I didn't ... I ended up going to hospital and having my appendix out so that I didn't have to go to school. I went that far. And there was nothing wrong with my appendix, I just faked it all so as I wouldn't have to go to school.
>
> (Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.18)

Analysis of the biographical neonarratives reveals that participants' perceptions of and responses to memberships within post-compulsory educational discourse communities is also complex. Although her goal is to do a Psychology degree, Louise perceives of membership of such a discourse community as threatening to her personal discourse community because of the necessary debt that this would entail (p.p.45-46). From a young age, Molly has always wanted to be a nurse and, in 2002, did an Access to Nursing course. Pursuing her goal to higher education, however, is perceived of by Molly as threatening to her family discourse community membership:

> I got an interview to go onto the Nursing course and I got on, which is great, but unfortunately my husband left me (*laughs*) which kind of threw me and put a dampener on that. And then I thought, 'No, the kids have got to come first' ...
>
> (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.31)

For Sandy, however, perceptions of discourse community membership within a college of further education are mixed. Sandy's husband had an accident three years ago and has been unable to work since. Membership of an educational discourse community is therefore, in this respect, perceived of by Sandy as supportive of her family discourse community as, with more qualifications, she hopes to better support her family financially. This membership, however, is also perceived of as threatening because, as Sandy explains:

> [My husband is] made up that I've still got something but, it's like he says, you know, *he's* meant to be the provider and I think at times it does get him down a little bit that he can't go out and do it.
>
> (Sandy, Biographical Neonarrative, p.24)

Anne's biographical neonarrative illustrates how she, too, has conflicting perceptions of membership within an education discourse community. In one respect, Anne suggests that, for her, membership of a college discourse community compensates for her changing role within her family discourse community:

> I'd been at home for so long and I've had so many health problems with my epilepsy and obviously a lot of other problems with arthritis and things, and I have been depressed before now. But I'm sick of being at home ... My son's old enough now, he can look after himself.
>
> (Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.39-40)

In another respect, however, Anne also perceives of her membership of an educational discourse community as threatening towards her family discourse community membership. In her biographical neonarrative, for example, Anne explains that, since starting college, her husband thinks she has changed (p.6). The excerpt below is from Anne's Interview 2 transcript and, although not included in her biographical neonarrative, illustrates how returning to the interview transcript enables a better understanding of this perceived threat:

> There's been a lot going on, I don't come running to [my husband] with open arms anymore and things like this ... I think it was just to reassure him that I wasn't having an affair. I said, 'But just 'cause I'm going to college, I'm not having an affair'. But that's what he thought I was doing.
>
> (Anne, Interview 2 transcript, p.p.7-8)

7.5   The importance of giving and receiving care

Chapter 6 discusses the distinction between personal and official discourse communities, beginning with Swales' (1990) first characteristic of a discourse community: to have a broadly agreed set of common goals. As discussed, personal discourse community goals are tacit and informed by the community members' everyday/everynight worlds (Smith, 2005), including their relationships within these. A family, for example, can be understood to be a personal discourse community and their shared goal may be to love and support one another. An official discourse community's goals are instead informed by the ruling relations (Smith, 2005) and are formally inscribed in documents. Caring and being cared for are important

themes within the biographical neonarratives and the findings suggest that 'care' plays a role in the interplay between personal and official discourse communities, informing participants' perceptions of and responses to memberships within official discourse communities.

In relation to employment-related discourse community memberships, there is evidence that the role of 'care' informs whether membership is perceived of as supportive, complementary or threatening, and consequently informs whether membership within a workplace discourse community is welcomed or rejected. Care appears to be important in two ways. First, where a participant identifies herself as a caring person, of importance is the extent to which community membership enables the participant to *care for other community members*. This is particularly important in the biographical neonarratives of Lexi, Beth, Louise, Sandy, Alice and Molly. Discussing her role as a home carer, for example, Beth explains that the caring role within her work-based discourse community is safer and more straightforward than in her personal discourse communities:

> ... I wanted to do a job that would give *me* some type of satisfaction and, at the end of the day, caring for people is *in* me. I *do* care. And that's been the problem I suppose most of my life, I've cared too much. I've taken too much on my shoulders. Whereas this isn't family, this is somebody that you can go and help and care for, be appreciated for it, get paid for it and come home and cut off, because it's *not* family ... I have recently, funnily enough, got very upset over a lady that's died because I thought the world of her. But it's a different grief, isn't it? My *heart* isn't breaking, because it's a different grief. It's a sad grief, rather than my heart breaking of grief.
>
> (Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.32)

The second way in which 'care' is important is in relation to the care and support that a participant *receives from other community members* through their membership of an official discourse community. Care received in the workplace, or lack of, features in the biographical neonarratives of Suzanne, Jalisa, Beth, Louise, Isla and Alice. As discussed, working with children is important to Louise because, as she explains, 'They're very kind and very caring' and 'You feel like somebody cares about you' (p.p.27-28). Conversely, following experiences of bullying at school, Suzanne's first membership within a workplace discourse community after leaving education was in a factory and was dominated by bullying. Suzanne left this job to have her son, now aged four, and has not returned to work since. The following excerpt from Suzanne's biographical neonarrative suggests that in motherhood she has found the care and support that she did not receive as a member of educational or employment-related discourse communities:

> When I had him it just felt right. That's been the thing all my life. I just never found it. And being a mum – that's it.
>
> (Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.1)

Suzanne explains that being a mum ensures that she does not put her own needs first, that it has changed the 'way I think and cope with things … [without Tom] I would have just thought too much into everything and started to get down and things' (Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.1). Similarly, Michal explains that one reason for sponsoring a child in India is so it is not 'all about *me*':

Actually, I'm trying to ask God what he wants to do with me. Because when it's all about *me* and *my* needs and things, it just doesn't work. I'm going to sponsor one child in India ... I feel really blessed to be here and got all this money and cars and everything and some people up there they just don't have any money. Nothing to eat. You know, it's not fair.

<div align="right">(Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.29)</div>

Care and being cared for are also central to the importance Michal places on his membership within the official discourse community of his church, and he explains:

... I've met some lovely people in there and they really care about each other so I'm really happy to be there ... you can feel it, it's really from the heart and they really care for each other. When I went there, it was the second or third time, these people came to me and said if I can join them to dinner after church, to his home. 'Whoa! You're joking?' (*laughs*) He doesn't even know me and he invites me for dinner at his home ... There's maybe twenty, maybe less, nationalities and there's black people, Asian, just everybody, and there's no racism in there. It's really nice, yeah.

<div align="right">(Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.5-6)</div>

7.6   Important discourse community members and care

Findings suggest that the importance of care extends to discourse community members and informs participants' perceptions of the official discourse communities of which they are

members, in turn influencing their responses to membership within them. Prior to taking part in the study, for example, Alice went through a difficult time when, in the space of a few weeks, her teenage son, Paul, was sent to prison and her brother-in-law was diagnosed with cancer. Juggling the changing circumstances of her family discourse community with the commitment of her full-time job, Alice explains how important it was at this time to have the care and support of her manager and colleagues:

> They've been so good with me regarding Paul, I can quite honestly say they've been spot on. I couldn't have had more support. I went through all that [with my brother-in-law] and then Paul got sent away, and the week that Paul got sent away you felt like you're bereaved ... It's the most awful feeling ever and I just left I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat properly ... But I had a week off then and my manager actually said to me, 'I don't know how you've lasted this long', because I'd been straight with her and she was *really* good.
>
> <div align="right">(Alice, Biographical Neonarrative, p.24)</div>

There are also examples within participants' biographical neonarratives of key people lacking caring qualities. When unemployed and at her most vulnerable, for example, Louise explains how she was treated badly by members of staff at her local Jobcentre:

> You go to the Jobcentre and you sit there. You just want to be in and out because you want to go off and find a job. They're horrible to you as well ... They're very strict. I said to the lady, 'I'm starting a new job. What am I going to do for money for a month?' 'Well, you should've saved some of your Job Seekers up. That's what you're supposed to do'.

By contrast, however, the head teacher who interviewed Louise and gave her a job opportunity is described as being very supportive:

> ... when [the head teacher] leaves I will be writing a letter to [him] because *he's* important to me in my life because he gave me a job when I *so, so* needed to feel good about myself. And *he* did, he gave me a chance.

Along with workplace discourse communities, there are also many examples in the biographical neonarratives of the importance of caring key people within educational discourse communities. In her life history interviews, Suzanne spoke a number of times about being placed in the bottom sets in high school and believes that it led to her being bullied and, in turn, to self harming. She explains:

> … you were like in sets and there was high and I was like in low for them all and they didn't really care really and I just got, it was stressful, they didn't really bother about us. I was in the class with a lot of the rough ones and I got bullied by a girl and then it went on for a long time and spoke to the teachers and they didn't do owt and it just got really frustrating. And that's when [the self harming] started.

Suzanne's criticism of the school teachers was that, because she was in the bottom sets, they did not care about her and wrote her off:

Had you been taught very much in your classes?

No. Because I was in the bottom sets, you just did what you liked … there was one [teacher] I didn't get on with and he just sat there and read his book and we were just left and we just did nothing. I mean, we used to go out of school and come back and he didn't even notice. He was asleep! … we could just do what we liked. I mean, I just didn't turn up for any lessons and none of the teachers cared. That's what it was like but if you were in the top sets, it's completely different. You get different teachers who work hard … They didn't care less about us so I didn't care. I did it [skived classes] every day.

(Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.12)

Unlike her teachers, however, Suzanne's school counsellor features as a key person in her biographical neonarrative because he *did* care about her, and is the reason that her family found out that she was self-harming:

I went to see one of the men who dealt with that at school. He were friends with everybody. I could go and speak to him and he just said, 'You're gonna have to tell your mum' and I went home and told my mum ... My friends knew him, they went to him ... he were just like us, he was so down to earth and knew everything that we were going through. And I could just talk to him.

(Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.7-17)

Beth not only experienced uncaring school teachers; she was bullied by a number of them. In the same way that Suzanne found a friend in her school counsellor, Beth describes how she received care from the school nurse. As previously discussed in this chapter, however, this led to Beth going to great lengths to reject her memberships within the classroom discourse communities. Sandy also discussed her memories of an uncaring maths teacher, citing him as the reason why she has never liked or been very good at Maths:

> I can always remember, I had a Maths teacher who was in the Territorial Army and he was very sort of strict ... I dreaded going to Maths lessons because he didn't like you asking questions. You just had to get on with it. And I can remember at parents' evening, you know, 'Why aren't you getting the marks?' 'Because I don't understand it'. 'Well, ask!' 'Yeah, but the minute you put your hand up in class it's, 'Right, out!' He'd send you out because, you know, he was *talking* at that time. So he made me feel funny about going into a maths lesson.
>
> <div align="right">(Sandy, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.19-20)</div>

Sandy goes on to explain that, like her, her daughter 'started struggling with *her* Maths' in school but that, 'lucky enough, she managed to get a teacher that sat with her and helped her' (p.29):

> I'm so grateful to that teacher for helping her with that because, you know, until I get this level 2 [numeracy] and I've got my *own* confidence back with maths, I don't feel like I can help her much.
>
> <div align="right">(Sandy, Biographical Neonarrative, p.29)</div>

7.7 Chapter summary

Using the life history interview tasks as a starting point, this chapter has addressed the importance placed by participants on their personal discourse community memberships. Focussing upon the concept of discourse community membership, the chapter has illustrated the interplay between personal and official discourse communities by drawing upon two key findings from this study: first, that official discourse community membership is perceived of by participants in three different ways; and, second, that these perceptions then inform participants' responses to membership within official discourse communities. The chapter has focused on two particular types of discourse community, those located within the domains of employment and education. As highlighted in Chapter 5, the giving and receiving of care and support is at the heart of personal discourse community goals. The findings presented in this chapter, suggest that care is also important in understanding the interplay between participants' memberships within personal and official discourse communities. Drawing on concepts of gender and identity, Chapter 8 will present further findings from this study to explore reasons for these perceptions and responses, along with the apparent importance of care.

Chapter 8: Voices in a Knowledge Conversation:

Understanding perceptions of and responses to official discourse community

memberships in the biographical neonarratives

8.1   Introduction: the Knowledge Conversation

The previous chapter has presented the first set of findings from this research, concerned with participants' memberships of both personal and official discourse communities as represented in their biographical neonarratives. First, by focusing on the ways in which participants chose to approach the four interview tasks, Chapter 7 illustrated the importance placed upon personal discourse community memberships. Having established the importance of personal discourse community memberships within the biographical neonarratives, the previous chapter then explored participants' perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships within their biographical neonarratives. As discussed, official discourse community memberships are perceived of as either supporting, compensating for or threatening towards participants' most valued personal discourse community memberships. These perceptions inform participants' responses to opportunities for new memberships within official discourse communities, with findings suggesting they respond in one of two ways: either by welcoming the memberships, or by rejecting them.

This chapter is concerned with understanding the reasons for the perceptions and responses discussed in the previous chapter, and presents a further key finding in the study:

3. Participants' perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships are epistemologically informed

Epistemological issues have been fundamental from the outset of this research. As discussed in Chapter 1, the two different narrative representations of focus in this study were understood from an early stage as representing, producing and privileging different identities and knowledges. In the fieldwork stages of the study, knowledge was identified as a recurring theme within participants' data, with Chapter 5 drawing on a variety of literature to discuss the privileging and disprivileging of different ways of knowing. As discussed, for Smith (2005), local knowledge is rooted in the knower's everyday / everynight lives and relationships, and is embodied within the knower. Conversely, objectified modes of knowing are associated with the ruling relations which '[divorce] the subject from the particularized settings and relationships' of everyday life (Smith, 2005, p.13). While the body in which the knower is located is important in relation to Smith's (2005) local knowledge, she argues that objectified modes of knowing are concerned only with the mind, and not the body.

Following the use of the analytical framework detailed in Chapter 6, data analysis confirmed knowledge to be a dominant theme across all twelve biographical neonarratives. Furthermore, in their biographical neonarratives, participants appear to conceptualise knowledge in relation to two distinct types: theoretical and practical. All participants engage in this Knowledge Conversation within their biographical neonarratives, positioning themselves in relation to these two particular ways of knowing, which they refer to as opposing epistemological types. The 'Conversation' about theoretical and practical knowledge that the participants engage in is based on socially and ideologically constructed categories, rather than reflecting a necessary reality. While acknowledging the dichotomy as

a social construct, however, it is a useful one in exploring issues of identity and narrative representation in this research. This chapter therefore focuses on these two types of knowledge and, in particular, the disparities between the two that are referenced in participants' biographical neonarratives. Drawing on Smith's (2005) terminology, the two epistemologies are referred to as 'objectified knowledge' and 'local, embodied knowledge'. The following excerpt from Molly's neonarrative in which she describes herself, her mum and her dad is a useful illustration of the ways in which the participants make reference to two distinct types of knowledge throughout their biographical neonarratives:

> My dad's really intelligent. He really is. I'm not saying that because he's my dad. He knows three languages, he knows how to do the computer, he's not long finished a Spanish course. He's dead clever. Puts me to shame. Because when he asks me questions, I don't know! (*laughs*) ... It's amazing, isn't it? How much they can store! I think, 'Gosh! Why wasn't my brain like that?' (*laughs*) More practicality things I do ... [My mum is] quite a clever lady. I mean, I know she's more practical. She knows practicality things. I know this sounds daft, but you know when your zip gets stuck on your coat? She runs a pencil up and down it ... apparently it's the lead in the pencil. So you rub the end of the pencil on your zip and it will zip up and down. I thought, 'God, how clever!' Because I thought, 'No, you're talking nonsense, mum', and she said, 'Oh, no. It works'. Different things she tells me, little things, and I think, 'That was really clever!' (*laughs*). But she's quite clever, my mum. She's lovely.
>
> (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.16-17)

Here, Molly's descriptions of her dad represent the objectified modes of knowledge of Smith's (2005) ruling relations. The knowledge Molly attributes to her dad, for example, is something he is able to 'store' in his 'brain', and the subject of the knowledge is therefore divorced 'from the particularized settings and relationships' of everyday life (Smith, 2005, p.13). In contrast, Molly describes both herself and her mum as knowing 'practical' things, such as the local, embodied knowledge of fixing a coat zip, as opposed to knowing different languages and 'how to do' the computer. While Molly acknowledges her mum's practical tip about the pencil and zip to be 'clever', it is assumed at first to be 'nonsense' and is an example of how local, embodied knowledge can be repressed by the objectified modes of knowing of the ruling relations (Smith, 1990). This repression is further illustrated in Molly's assertion that her dad is 'dead clever', followed immediately but 'Puts me to shame'. By comparison to her dad's objectified knowledge, Molly does not consider herself to be knowledgeable. The following pages illustrate how, like Molly, all participants talk about knowledge in these two opposing ways, reinforcing the importance of knowledge in relation to identity in the biographical neonarratives.

As a result of the two opposing types of knowledge referred to within the biographical neonarratives, these references are considered representative of one particular Knowledge Conversation. Gee's (2011) tool of inquiry, 'Big "C" Conversation', was introduced in Chapter 5 as representative of 'debates in society' that are widely recognizable 'both in terms of what "sides" there are to take in such debates and what sorts of people tend to be on each side' (p.201). Discussions about knowledge and how the participants' position themselves and others in relation to a Knowledge Conversation – in this case two perceived epistemological positions – are therefore important in understanding the representation of participant identities within the biographical neonarrative. The 'Big "C" Conversation' (Gee,

2011) about knowledge is also important in relation to understanding participation across different discourse communities. Returning to Swales' (1990) characteristics of a discourse community, a Knowledge Conversation can be understood as fulfilling a number of roles within a discourse community: first, by positioning members on particular sides of a Conversation, a discourse community ensures 'commonality of goal' between its members (Swales, 1990, p.25); second, by providing a '[line] of communication back to base', the endorsement of a particular side of a Knowledge Conversation ensures that the 'sharing of discursive practice occurs' between community participants (Swales, 1990, p.25); and, finally, by functioning in a similar way to a text or genre, a Knowledge Conversation '[develops] and continues to develop discoursal expectations' which further the community's aims (Swales, 1990, p.26).

As will become apparent in the course of this chapter, the particular Knowledge Conversation which features within participants' biographical neonarratives is fundamental to understanding participant perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships as discussed in the previous chapter.

8.2   Voices, Knowledge and Identities

Chapter 6 introduced voice-centred relational methodology, explaining how I turned to literature that advocates the importance of attending to participant voice within qualitative research. Consequently, a voice-centred approach was incorporated into the analytical framework detailed in Chapter 6, with Reading 3 of the data focusing on participants' voices within the two neonarratives. The 'I poem' is a way to 'capture concepts not directly stated

by the informant, yet central to the meaning of what she has said' (Woodcock, 2005, p.50). I poems are therefore a powerful way to attend to voice and to explore the ways in which participants construct and represent identities for themselves within the biographical neonarrative. Attending to voice in this way provides an insight into how participants describe themselves and their comparisons between self and others, revealing voices – and identities – which may otherwise remain unheard.

Chapter 5 has discussed the importance of school as a site of identity formation (Hatt, 2007). Chapter 7 has also explored the different perceptions of school discourse community memberships that are evident within participants' biographical neonarratives. I poems about participants' schooling reveal how their experiences of membership within this particular discourse community inform the 'sides' (Gee, 2011, p.201) they take in this particular Knowledge Conversation. For Michal, for example, primary school was where he came to think of himself as 'smart'. Michal's mum died in the summer holidays, a month before he started high school, which disrupted this to some degree:

> I was one of the smartest kids in class [at primary school] because it a village and
>
> not many people
>
> I wasn't that good in [high school]
>
> I wasn't bad
>
> I was just middle, average
>
> I thought I'm still OK
>
> I'm still smart enough
>
> I didn't learn that much as
>
> I should do

I realised that after one year when

I get my certificate

You've got one, two, three, four, five - so one is best and five is worst

Three is quite embarrassing really

I had plenty of threes in there and realised

I had to start pushing myself forward. In the second year

I was just one, one, one, one - sometimes two. And third and fourth year, wasn't

that good

I don't know why

I didn't really care, and

I started to prepare to uni

<div align="right">(Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.17-18)</div>

Even when struggling to come to terms with his mum's death while at high school, his biographical neonarrative sees Michal position himself on the objectified side of the Knowledge Conversation describing himself as 'still smart enough'. As discussed in the previous chapter, Michal left university before finishing his degree. In the following I poem, Michal compares his own education in Slovakia to the Adult Literacy and Numeracy courses offered within his college:

I see a big difference between knowledge and stuff. In my [literacy] class as well

I'd never been expecting like in our class it's English people and my grammar it's

many times better than theirs. They are English, they live here, they are learning

and everything but it's boring for me in there sometimes [in class]

I was surprised … In Maths, everything here the children in our primary schools

have to know that and they learn it in college here

I was shocked when I saw them tests and everything for Maths especially. When

I see the subjects here, like Maths, it's not equivalent

I finished exams from university in Maths

I'm pretty sure I'm better than the teacher here, because what we did in there, it's

unbelievable. It was really, really hard

<div align="right">(Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.20)</div>

The knowledge being discussed here by Michal represents objectified knowledge associated with the ruling relations (Smith, 2005). Michal's position in the Knowledge Conversation is reaffirmed with his assertion that, as his university degree was challenging, he is probably 'better than the teacher'. For other participants in the study, however, their membership of school discourse communities saw them assume their position on the opposite side of this Knowledge Conversation. The following I poem, for example, is constructed from an excerpt in which Alice reflects on her schooling and O' level exams:

I always find people are like really clever and have a lot of knowledge

I always feel a bit not intimated but a bit thick

I'm a bit lost - 'God, what are they on about?'

I'm not the brightest in the bunch by a long shot but

I pride myself on the fact that perhaps

I've got quite a lot of common sense and

I tend to find that people with one don't have the other

I don't always think the two mingle very well

I think you're lucky if you do

I like to think I've got lots of common sense

I wish I'd have paid a bit more attention [at school] and then perhaps I'd have

done a bit better

<div align="right">(Alice, Biographical Neonarrative, p.39)</div>

Here, Alice compares herself with other people who she assumes to be on the objectified side of the Knowledge Conversation, people she describes as 'really clever' but as lacking 'common sense'. Although Alice prides herself on having 'a lot of common sense', she suggests that this local, embodied knowledge is not as valid as objectified knowledge and that, in comparison, she feels 'a bit thick'. Like Alice, Sandy's experience of school saw her positioned on one particular side of the Knowledge Conversation:

I hate an exam. In the test situation

I go completely blank … when

I was at school

I did Business Studies

I was guided that way because of course

I didn't think

I was going to come out very well with English and Maths so they put me in

Business Studies.

It wasn't so much of a sit in the hall for an hour to do a test - it was based on

coursework

<div align="right">(Sandy, Biographical Neonarrative, p.20)</div>

At school, Sandy therefore came to think of herself as not good at exams and was 'guided' into a vocational course to avoid taking any. Findings from this study reveal how, through official discourse community memberships such as school, participants perceive themselves as taking up, or being positioned on, a particular side of this Knowledge Conversation. I poems reveal how the women in this study perceive themselves as positioned on the side of local, embodied knowledge, as opposed to objectified knowledge. This positioning is more complicated for Anne, who began suffering from epilepsy in her early twenties, affecting both her long- and short-term memory. Anne is unable to recall anything about her own childhood and teenage years and explains that her mum, brother and sister 'know it all':

I can't even remember places

I used to work, and some of the things my mum tells me

I get annoyed sometimes, 'cause

I say to myself, 'It's not fair.

I can't remember this, and

I can't remember that'. Even birthdays, they can remember.

I can't remember nothing. And going on holiday with the family and things like that

I can't remember anything … Like, my kids seem to remember a lot more than me

(Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.2)

For Anne, her knowledge about herself is perceived as objectified knowledge which others are able to store and recall, while she cannot. When describing herself, Anne often uses the

words 'numb' and 'thick'. By contrast, when describing her role in the home, Anne feels very knowledgeable while her husband, having been used to working away for much of the time, has 'forgot how family life is' and 'how to join in':

> I think he's found that hard because
>
> I'm on the go all the time
>
> I try and do things and he's thinking, 'I'm sat here. What do I do?' Things need
>
> doing in the house and things and he's just not used to it.
>
> I've got him, he's been painting and things. Painting the house and whatever

<div align="right">(Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.8)</div>

The women in the study each talk about their family lives and the complex ways in which they manage their households, balancing competing demands and commitments. The following I poem, for example, is constructed from a discussion in which Jalisa describes her typical week:

> I take the kids to school Mondays and then
>
> I come back home and clean the house, well try and get it clean as best I can
>
> I do that, bits of cleaning every day, and washing and drying and as much ironing
>
> as I can. Then Tuesday we usually go and do a bit more shopping, then come
>
> back, do a bit more ironing, a bit more cleaning. Wednesdays and Thursdays
>
> I'm at college
>
> I get home, try and do some more cleaning and whatever, 'cause it's a full-time
>
> job trying to clean at the back of [Katie]! (*laughs*) Then Friday,

I'm out shopping again to get the weekly shopping, and that's what [my week]

consists of. Then at the weekend, it's just all Katie – well every other weekend

I get two weekends off a month, and that's for me.

<div align="right">(Jalisa, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.7-8)</div>

The above I poem illustrates how Jalisa's local, embodied knowledge is rooted in a busy

daily routine. As discussed in Chapter 5, 'The embodied knower begins in her experience.

Here she is expert' (Smith, 2005, p.24). The expertise of local, embodied knowledge is also

evident within Molly's biographical neonarrative:

I like to eat before 7 o'clock

I'll get in

I'll make the tea, make sure that they've done their homework. Normally when

I get home, there's an extra friend round so

I have to feed their friends

I enjoy cooking actually

I just don't like the washing up

I hate doing that

I like it when

I've got a nice tidy kitchen and

I do hate the washing up

I get the kids roped in just lately to do that because

I think they should really

I've kind of let them not do a lot really and

I should make them do more

I've got to take Tristan for his guitar lesson [on Saturdays] and

I go Fat Fighters Saturday morning (*laughs*). Well

I call it Fat Fighters! (*laughs*) It's Weight Watchers

(Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.1)

Importantly, however, participants do not acknowledge their local, embodied knowledge as equating to expertise beyond their personal discourse communities. In the above I poems, Jalisa and Molly suggest their routines are necessary but boring, with Molly saying 'That's every single day and it's a bit boring really, I suppose' (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.2). In interview, participants often apologised for talking about the routines associated with their personal discourse community memberships, concerned that it might be boring for me to listen to. While important in their personal discourse community memberships, participants assume that their local, embodied knowledges are less valid than objectified modes of knowing beyond these communities.

For those participants who are members of workplace discourse communities, however, the transfer of their local, embodied knowledge into their workplace discourse communities is considered important by them. Louise's biographical neonarrative, for example, contains a number of examples regarding the importance of transferring knowledge rooted in everyday personal experience into the workplace:

I think it's really good that you do a job like that [in the Job Centre] if you've

been in that position and you're able to understand

I know

I think that's one of the reasons that

I do the job that

I do because, growing up as a child, in my teens, wasn't brilliant so for children that

I work with

I *can* understand if you come from a different background or you have to explain things again

I put myself in their position and

I want to give them something that maybe

I never had

I think it is important that you have that understanding

I think it's just easier to be the woman in the Jobcentre who says you should be saving some of your job seekers up

<div align="right">(Louise, Biographical Neonarrative, p.29)</div>

The knowledge to which Louise refers here is not learned in school and is instead the result of personal experience. Like Louise, Lexi values knowledge which results from personal experience above that which does not. While valuing the knowledge she can bring to the role of a youth worker - knowledge which results from her own personal experience - Lexi explains that this knowledge is not as valid as that of people who themselves 'have actually been a youth offender' as 'they've got more than I have' (Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.24).

The use of I poems illustrates some of the references within participants' biographical neonarratives to two different types of knowledge and two perceived sides of a particular Knowledge Conversation: local embodied knowledge and objectified knowledge.

Participants' I poems suggest that, for them, objectified knowledge is characterised by being 'really clever', 'smart' and 'academic'. By contrast, when discussing local, embodied knowledge, personal experience is important, along with understanding people and putting oneself in the position of others.

Importantly, however, participants do not consider their local, embodied knowledge to have parity with objectified knowledge within official discourse communities. As a result, participants do not consider people positioned on the two opposing sides of the conversation to be equals within official discourse communities. The following section discusses some of the epistemological tensions that are evident within the biographical neonarratives which arise as a result of this disparity.

8.3   Official discourse communities and epistemological tensions

The objectified knowledge of official discourse communities takes many forms within participants' data. In one example, when Louise is discussing the school in which she works, it takes the form of a 'little man in the office':

> But we were talking to this lady on the course and she was saying basically in schools that sometimes they judge a school - they don't look at children's backgrounds by results. Because we have a lot of children that have special needs and that don't get good results whereas the government don't see that. I don't know how to explain it but the lady said that if you've got the majority of children on free school meals then that goes to this little man in the office - that's

how she explained it - who sits and records all the data and if they then get low scoring in their results, they then don't take in to account the background of the children ... But the government just go in and see one school as a whole. They don't see that the children are all different and work at different levels ... They'll probably just see the results and think, 'That school's failing', and I think that's a wrong way, just by looking at results, a wrong way to look at it

(Louise, Biographical Neonarrative, p.48)

Here, Louise presents a tension between her own everyday knowledge, gained as a result of working with the children and understanding that they 'are all different', and the objectified knowledge of the inspection system, based upon results. Tensions between the two sides of this Knowledge Conversation are present within each of the twelve biographical neonarratives. When discussing her divorce proceedings, Isla highlights the same tensions:

And that makes it worse because now you're tearing shreds off each other. To go into a solicitor and say, 'Well, I don't love him. We've been together thirty five years basically and now I know my own mind', that's not right. I need a good reason like violence, drinking, controlling. So then you're trying to stretch the truth out a bit ... When I read it I thought, 'Oh my gosh, it sounds so horrible'. And it's not what I wanted to do, you know. [The solicitor] hasn't put anything that's not true, but it's the way it's worded

(Isla, Biographical Neonarrative, p.14)

Within a law-related official discourse community, Isla is made to feel that her local, embodied knowledge about her own marriage of 35 years is not considered a legitimate

reason to file for divorce. This is an example of 'the socially organized and organizing practices of using language that constitute objectified knowledges' which 'are embedded in and integral to the relations of ruling (Smith, 1990, p.4). For Isla, the disprivileging of her own knowledge in this particular example not only 'stretches the truth' but leads to further problems within her family, as they feel hurt by the official reasons for the divorce. In another example, Anne explains how she became concerned about her son's educational development:

I noticed that there was something wrong in Reception, in his first year, and though I hadn't had a child at that age before – I didn't know what to expect – I knew he was struggling compared to all the other children in the class. Because he used to come out and say to me, 'Why am I still on these pink books?' and everybody else has gone way past him and he couldn't understand why. So I knew something wasn't right but his teacher in Reception, it was her first year teaching so she didn't have too much experience so she didn't know, but as soon as he got into Year 1, [his Year 1 teacher] noticed within a week that he needed help and it all started from there.

(Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.12)

Anne's concerns that 'something was wrong' with her son were only acted upon when a more experienced teacher noticed 'that he needed help'. Anne explains in detail how her son underwent numerous hospital tests and other assessments to establish whether or not he had special educational needs:

It took two and a half years of fighting to try and get the help and going through

all these assessments and things. Eventually, when he got the help, he was seven

<div align="right">(Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.12)</div>

For Anne, her plight to secure educational support for her son was experienced as a 'fight' and did not end there. She explains how, throughout this process, her local, embodied knowledge about her son and his educational needs was never considered valid by the education board:

And then towards the end of that first year at high school, [the education board] arranged a meeting by *themselves*, without me *knowing*, and they let me know by a letter in the post that they'd had a meeting and Richard won't be getting any more help from now, which I was absolutely disgusted at … They always made me feel as though they knew better than me. But they hadn't had a child that *had* learning difficulties so, to me, they didn't have all the experience. They always say a mother knows what her child needs. Obviously, they're more experienced in trying to find out whether there is or there isn't something wrong. A mother always thinks her child might be worse and might need more. But I did find it hard, as though sometimes they weren't listening and they'd just give him what they thought. And obviously everybody wants the best for their child so you just fight for more and more.

<div align="right">(Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.13-14)</div>

Chapter 7 focused on employment and education-related discourse communities to illustrate participants' perceptions of and responses to community memberships. Along with the

tensions that arise within law- and education-related discourse communities, such as the examples above, there are also many examples relating to participants' memberships within health-related discourse communities that reveal tensions as a result of the disparity between participants' local, embodied knowledges and the objectified modes of knowing privileged within the official discourse communities. Beth, for example, is from a large family and explains that, as she and her siblings approach their fifties, she has concerns and fears about her own health and theirs:

> None of my aunties or uncles or mum, on mum's side, made 60. None of them, they all died of a heart attack. And it's not the type you have necessarily symptoms of. You know, there's no lead up to it.

> Or warning signs?

> No, it's 'gone'. And my eldest brother's done the same. He's 52. He was 52. And he was walking over [a local] bridge: gone. He's been gone three years. Three years. So also it's a worrying time. I'm coming up to my fifties and I *am* anxious about it, you know, and I *do* get scared.

> (Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.5)

Beth's health concerns are heightened because, as she explains, she has known doctors to be wrong in the past:

> [My brother had] gone to the hospital twice in the same, that week and said, 'Look there's something not right. I don't feel right'. They did an ECG, they did

all the blood tests. 'You're totally fine'. He was dead two days later … [The doctor] told us that dad had twelve months, six to twelve months to live. And he lived another seven years. He told us that mum was fine and she was dead a week later. So, yes you think, you know, what's the point in me going to the doctors because they don't know anyway.

(Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.6)

For Beth, the objectified knowledge of health-related discourse communities is limited because the heart condition suffered by so many of her relatives 'doesn't show up on ECG, it doesn't show up on anything' (Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.6). While the medical profession cannot detect it, Beth's embodied knowledge includes a 'sensitivity' that means she knows that 'something is not right':

…I had this really strange feeling and it was of something's not right. Can't explain it, I just knew Sandra, there was something not right. And I get like, not a premonition, but I get like butterflies in my stomach and I feel a bit, 'There's something not right, something's gonna happen' … …and held my mum's hand and whilst I was holding her hands I *knew* there was something going to happen to my mum. And that was two weeks before she died. I got this feeling that, I can't explain it, when I was holding her hands. Fear - I think the feeling I had was fear.

(Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.8-9)

Beth explains that 'I've had those feelings since I was a little girl' and emphasises that 'I'm not saying I can see into the future or that I'm psychic or anything'. In interview, Beth was apologetic about discussing this local, embodied knowledge and was keen to have my

assurance that I understood what she meant, and to not appear stupid by discussing her sensitivity. Beth understands that, in comparison to the objectified knowledge privileged within medical discourse communities, her own knowledge is not considered valid. This is perhaps the reason why she has these feelings but often rejects them (see Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.9).

The previous examples have illustrated some of the tensions that arise from the disparity between embodied and objectified knowledges within official discourse communities. The following example illustrates that such tensions can have very serious implications. Anne's first son died when he was seven months old and, more than twenty years on, she finds talking about the events surrounding his death painful and upsetting. Anne chose to focus on these events in her first life history interview but felt unable to read the full transcript and requested that many details were removed in the construction of her biographical neonarrative. As a first-time mum, Anne's concerns about her son's health were ignored by doctors:

> Obviously the doctors didn't listen to me. I kept saying there was something wrong but I was an over-protective mother as they said. Erm, which wasn't very nice. Obviously your first child, you don't really know what to do but you just try and carry on as best you can. And I found out he had a lot of other problems. I found out he had a cyst where they tried to say it was me that hurt him. They said it was a fractured skull at first but then they found out it was a cyst from birth that brought the fracture out
>
> (Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.22)

Anne's son's cyst was only discovered in the weeks following his death. In the meantime, Anne and her husband were accused of child abuse and, later, of causing their son's death:

> They interviewed all my friends, all my family. They went through all my past, through my family, but eventually - I had to go through so many meetings and at the meetings I found out from the last scan he had it was a cyst that had cause the fracture … They was alright, they were with me all along. My own doctor, my own midwife. They knew. For what feedback they got from my friends and family, that I wouldn't do anything to hurt my child. Me and my husband, we went through a lot. It was heartbreaking … It was the main doctor who actually did this to us, because everybody else was fine at the hospital. My midwife, she knew me.
>
> (Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.23-24)

For Anne and her husband, it is 'the main doctor' in particular who represents the objectified knowledge that is privileged within medical discourse communities. In contrast, their family and friends, their own doctor and own midwife are all described as having been caring and supportive, because they *knew* Anne and her husband and, as a result of this local, embodied knowledge, they *knew* they 'wouldn't do anything to hurt' their child. The following section addresses this particular aspect of embodied knowledge: knowing and being known by people.

8.4   Embodied knowledge (Smith, 2005) and the importance of knowing people

As previously discussed, local, embodied knowledge is rooted in knowers' everyday / everynight lives and relationships. Participants who consider themselves to be positioned on the embodied side of the Knowledge Conversation consider knowing people and being known by people to be very important. When discussing her social life, for example, Suzanne explains:

> I stay in [this town] because the pubs, I sort of know everybody, all my friends and we go - there's a new wine bar just opened, so we're there a lot! That's all there is really to do [here]! That's why I like it, because it's a small town. I know everybody in the pub
>
> (Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.2)

Relationships and knowledge about people is at the heart of embodied knowledge. When going through her divorce, most members of Isla's family fell out with her, believing her to be having an affair, and it was important to her that her neighbour knows her well:

> And I bumped in to my neighbour the other week. Anyway, she said, 'We're always here. It doesn't matter what he says, we know what you're like and anybody else that knows you will be taking no notice of him'
>
> (Isla, Biographical Neonarrative, p.12)

Lexi also feels it is important that her two sons have a chance to get to know their dad:

I said to him, 'Who do you think *you* are choosing that they can't have something to do with their dad?' It's nowt to do with me, it's not my choice and it shouldn't be his choice … I would still prefer them to have something to do with him because he's got this reputation. See, I know more about their dad than they do, and that's not fair, do you know? And as they're growing up, they'll hear all the bad things about him. They won't learn to even like the good things about him, they won't have that chance.

<div align="right">(Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.33-34)</div>

Along with being an important part of their personal discourse communities, participants consider knowing and being known by people to be important within the official discourse communities of which they are members. As discussed, in the events surrounding Anne's son's death, for example, Anne describes her own doctor and midwife as knowing her and therefore as knowing that she would not hurt her own baby, an example of the importance placed by participants on knowing and being known by people within official discourse communities. Similarly, Alice talks about the importance of knowing people within workplace official discourse communities. Towards the end of her participation in the project, Alice decided to leave her job as a kitchen supervisor in a primary school and take a new and more challenging role within a large secondary school. Alice's discussion about her decision to postpone telling her colleagues highlights the value she places on knowing each member of her team:

'Olive would be *beside* herself and Ali would be all of a dither. Bev won't be bothered, she's just not fazed by anything, but Olive would be mythered to death and I do worry about her. But I have to think about myself, I can't - because

Olive's not going to be there for that much longer and Ali wouldn't give me a

second thought. *So* I can't stay for them. And I shall just be straight and say. It's

so hard not to say anything but they don't know yet and I'm not saying anything

until I know what's going on.

<div align="right">(Alice, Biographical Neonarrative, p.48)</div>

Similarly, when asked how she feels about starting her new job, Alice suggests again the importance of being known by and of knowing some people within her new workplace discourse community:

I know a *couple* of the girls [at the new school]. I know a lot of the teachers.

Don't know all of them but all of my children have gone to that school so I do

know quite a number of the teachers and I think they'll be glad to see me, yeah.

<div align="right">(Alice, Biographical Neonarrative, p.50)</div>

For Suzanne, her decision to enrol on the Adult Literacy course at her local library was informed by the fact the tutor is a family friend. As a result, Suzanne did not feel nervous about starting the course and she explains that the tutor was very important in her decision to take part in the course:

Because I know [her]. And if it weren't [her] I would probably have panicked a

little bit! But because I've known her most of my life, it made it that much

easier. Because I doubt if I would have done it if it weren't [her]'

<div align="right">(Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.20)</div>

Although participants perceive of objectified forms of knowledge as being privileged within official discourse communities, they challenge this in their biographical neonarratives by stressing the importance of one particular aspect of local knowledge – knowing and being known by people – in official discourse communities. Emily makes reference to this in her biographical neonarrative when discussing the death of her brother. Although having recently suffered an angina attack, Emily's brother insisted on continuing with his plans to go on holiday and, as she explains, following his return 'he was only home three days from Madeira and he died' (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.24). In search of some answers as to what exactly had caused his death, Emily visited her GP:

> ... after he died, I came out in eczema which I'm a little bit prone to, and I said to the doctor when I went there, I said, 'I want to ask you a few more questions while I'm here'. I said, 'Could you tell me about my brother?' and he said, 'Yeah'. So he said, 'You'll have to tell me his name' because he said, 'I don't know your family'. He said, 'Those doctors that knew you have gone, haven't they?' and I said, 'Yeah'. So I told him, and he said, 'Oh, yeah, I've got [the file] in the window there'.
>
> (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, pages 23-24)

In this example, Emily suggests there are no longer any doctors in her local surgery who know her and her family and the GP instead consulted the '[file] in the window'. In another example from Emily's biographical neonarrative, she discusses the new rules that were introduced in her workplace:

In the school where I was there was 200 children and on my lunchtime there was 172 children on hot lunches, so it was a bit like *Ready, Steady, Cook* (*laughs*) ... And then they brought in the rules where you couldn't use your fryer. Oh but I just had to do it ... I *always* put it on at 12 o'clock because if I was stuck for the last few children - sometimes they didn't have the right dinner numbers and you might have had half a dozen children more than you should've done. So I quickly had it there ready so if I was stuck I could throw something in if I needed to. And I always had ham in the fridge or tuna or - I always had something that I could quickly get together. No child would ever go without anything. There were one or two days some children forgot to come for some lunch and I'd find them something. I'd send them back to the classroom, 'Right go back, I'll cook you lunch. Come in ten, fifteen minutes and you can have your lunch'. It's doing the extra mile. Probably I did the extra mile in the workplace that a lot of other people wouldn't do ... You know, you will get rewarded for that extra mile. It's not in your wage packet, is it? ... You do it - well, they used to tell me I was soft - but that's how I believed that I should work and that's how I did work.

(Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.34)

Emily suggests that her local, embodied knowledge about the children and what was needed to ensure that 'No child would ever go without anything' is more important than the objectified knowledge that informs the new rules, including not being allowed to use a deep fat fryer. Similarly, Molly also refers to new rules in her own school kitchen:

[The area manager's] really clamping down now. It's my portion sizes. They're too big, but when I tried to reduce them - last week, when she came in, she said

I've got to reduce them - I reduced them and the boys just kicked off. 'No way!'

And one of them said, 'I'm bringing in sandwiches', so I've lost a child through

it. It's frustrating. Yeah, one of the lads was really disgusted with me. You feel

awful, don't you? I feel like it's my fault ... [it's because of] Money and budgets

... I'm giving them too much protein. I'm giving them too much meat. So I've

had to curb that down and give them all potatoes, carbs, you know?

<div align="right">(Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.27)</div>

Molly expresses frustration at the new rules being introduced which she perceives as being less about the children's health and more about 'money and budgets'. As with the other examples, Molly suggests that her local, embodied knowledge about what is best for the children should be considered more important than the objectified knowledge informing rules about portion sizes.

8.5   Findings so far: Biographical neonarratives and participant identities

Drawing on the findings presented in both this and the previous findings chapters, it is important to revisits the research question and summarise the answers arrived at thus far. As discussed in the previous chapter, all participants in this study place great importance on their personal discourse community memberships within the biographical neonarratives. Drawing on examples of how participants approached each of the four life history interview tasks, this is illustrated in detail in the early part of Chapter 7. Importantly, however, participants' biographical neonarratives also illustrate the ways in which they negotiate memberships across a number of personal *and* official discourse communities, with memberships perceived

of in three distinct ways: as supporting, compensating for, or threatening their most valued personal discourse community memberships. These perceptions inform participants' responses to opportunities for new memberships, with findings suggesting they respond in one of two ways: either by welcoming memberships, or by rejecting them. Furthermore, 'care' plays an important role in the interplay between personal and official discourse communities, informing participants' perceptions of and responses to memberships within official discourse communities.

Within their biographical neonarratives, all twelve participants engage in a particular Knowledge Conversation in which they perceive of two opposing epistemological types: local, embodied knowledge and objectified knowledge (Smith, 2005). This Knowledge Conversation is important in answering the following research question:

> Within their biographical neonarratives, what identities do the adults construct for themselves?

By engaging in this Knowledge Conversation within their biographical neonarratives, participants in this study can be understood as positioning themselves, and others, in relation to these two perceived ways of knowing. This has been illustrated by drawing on all participants' neonarratives, for example Molly's in which she describes her dad in relation to objectified modes of knowing, while describing herself and her mum in terms of local, embodied knowledge. The Knowledge Conversation identified within participants' biographical neonarratives is important in understanding participation across different discourse communities. It is also important in understanding the representation of participant identities within the biographical neonarrative and in answering the above question because,

as Gee (2011) explains, Big "C" Conversations represent 'debates in society' that are widely recognizable 'both in terms of what "sides" there are to take in such debates and what sorts of people tend to be on each side' (p.201).

Of the twelve to take part in the study, Michal is the only participant to position himself on the objectified side of the Knowledge Conversation. Drawing on excerpts of participants' neonarratives, this chapter has illustrated how the eleven women in the study identify with and position themselves on the local, embodied side of the Knowledge Conversation. Within their personal discourse communities, the women talk about their local, embodied knowledge in terms of expertise. Within official discourse communities, however, they do not consider this knowledge to have parity with objectified knowledge. As a result, participants do not consider people positioned on the two opposing sides of the conversation to be equals. This disparity is fundamental in understanding participants' perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships, and is discussed in detail in Chapter 10. For those women who are members of workplace discourse communities, the transfer of their local, embodied knowledge into their workplace discourse communities is considered important. In particular, a specific aspect of local, embodied knowledge is considered to be important: knowing and being known by people. Although participants perceive of objectified forms of knowledge as being privileged within official discourse communities, they challenge this by stressing the importance of this particular epistemological aspect – knowing and being known by people – within official discourse communities.

On the surface of things, by referring to a particular Knowledge Conversation in their biographical neonarratives and by positioning themselves on a particular side of it, the women participants in this study appear to represent themselves as inexpert. By attending to

the voices within this particular Knowledge Conversation, however, participants' biographical neonarratives can be heard and understood in a different way. The life stories contained within the biographical neonarratives narrate participants' memberships across numerous personal and official discourse communities. While they are aware that official discourse communities privilege objectified forms of knowledge, the women's stories assert the importance of their local, embodied knowledges to their memberships within official discourse communities. In doing so, the women therefore challenge the disjuncture they experience between the knowledge of value within their personal discourse communities and that which is privileged within official discourse communities. To answer the above research question, detailed analysis of the biographical neonarratives reveals that, in fact, all participants represent themselves as experts, irrespective of which side they take in this particular Knowledge Conversation.

8.6   Chapter summary

This chapter has presented a further key finding in the study, that participants' perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships are epistemologically informed. Within their biographical neonarratives, all twelve participants engage in a particular Knowledge Conversation in which they perceive of two opposing epistemological types. These are referred to in this research using Smith's (2005) terminology: local, embodied knowledge and objectified knowledge. This Knowledge Conversation – including the disparities and tensions that emerge as a result of it – is important in understanding participants' perceptions of official discourse community memberships and their responses to membership opportunities.

The following chapter will now focus on the ILP neonarrative, along with tutor and learner interview data regarding the ILPs, to explore the research questions in relation to this narrative representation of adult literacy learners.

Chapter 9: The ILP neonarrative

and membership of the Skills for Life discourse community

9.1   Introduction

The first two findings chapters, Chapters 7 and 8, have provided an insight into participants' memberships within personal and official discourse communities, and how these inform the identities represented within participants' biographical neonarratives.   This chapter now draws on tutor and learner interview data regarding the ILPs, along with the ILP neonarrative itself, to answer the following research questions:

1. Within their ILP neonarratives, what identities are constructed for the adult learners?
3. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within the biographical neonarrative and the ILP neonarrative?

9.2   The ILP neonarratives: a brief note

Before addressing these research questions, there are some important points to note regarding the ILPs of focus in this study. As outlined in Chapter 4, this study enlisted the help of four adult literacy tutors working across two different provider organisations in the northwest of England, one an FE college and one a local authority. As a result, twelve adult literacy learners took part in the research, recruited from five different classrooms across these two institutions.

As a result of adult literacy learners being recruited from different classrooms and taught by tutors based in different providers, there are a number of differences between the ILP neonarratives of focus in this study. The content of each participant's ILP is outlined in Appendix 15. As this highlights, the ILPs collected as part of this study illustrate many of the differences that can exist between the ILPs created and used within different institutions and individual classrooms as a result of the 'permissive guidance' (Hamilton, 2009) discussed in Chapter 2. In Provider 1, for example, only a few documents make up learners' ILP neonarratives while the ILPs in Provider 2 contain a number of documents. Along with content, there are differences in the paperwork practices that surround the completion of the ILPs. Learners enrolled at Provider 1, for instance, are required to complete an initial assessment but have no further involvement in the completion of the ILP paperwork. In Provider 2 classrooms, however, the ILP paperwork is visible and requires completion in each lesson. Participants' ILPs therefore differ across provider and classroom, and these differences are returned to later in this chapter.

9.3 Meanings assigned to the literacy course within the biographical neonarratives

Returning to Key Finding 1, presented in Chapter 7, analysis of the biographical neonarratives suggests that membership within official discourse communities is perceived of in three ways:

- as supporting or complementing their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

- as compensating for their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

- as threatening their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

As explained in Chapter 4, participants were encouraged to discuss their ILP paperwork in the final life history interview and analysis of this data suggests that the first two of these three perceptions are also useful in understanding participants' memberships within the official discourse community of Skills for Life.

First, findings suggest that membership of the Skills for Life discourse community can be perceived of as supporting or complementing participants' future plans and goals. Alice, for example, has the opportunity to be a First Responder at work but must first achieve the Level 2 Adult Literacy qualification. Similarly, one of the reasons Anne enrolled on a literacy course relates to her longer-term goal to return to paid employment:

> I'd been at home for so long and I've had so many health problems with my epilepsy and obviously a lot of other problems with arthritis and things, and I have been depressed before now. But I'm sick of being at home. I'm glad I *have* been at home because I've seen my kids grow up, because I wouldn't like anybody else minding them, but now I want to do something so eventually me and my husband can do things together … I want to do something but I really don't know. Like, I love travel. I'd love to work in a travel agents. I'd like to help children with learning difficulties and I think it's a bit of everything really at the minute … I want the qualifications because I would like to do something to work with children with special needs in school and obviously you've got to have some form of qualification to do something like that. I'm going to need my

maths and English, especially my English, and then hopefully I'll be able to go further and find out what else I have to do.

<div align="right">(Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, pages 39-40)</div>

Findings suggest that membership of the Skills for Life discourse community can also be perceived of as compensating for other discourse community memberships. Beth, for example, explains that 'I never learnt anything [at school]. I was always watching the door to see how many of [the bullies] were out there' (Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.22). Having left this school because of bullying, Beth explains:

I [then] went to [a school] for special needs basically, not as in disabled but problem children, whereas I wasn't a problem child but they had nowhere else to send me. However, it was good because it was one-to-one tuition. I loved it. It was one-to-one tuition and for the last twelve months, I learnt more in that twelve months than all the time I'd ever been in school from a baby. Because I had no pressure, I had nobody waiting outside the classroom door, and I *loved* it. So I knew that I liked to learn, and I knew that had I have been left alone through teachers and pupils, I think - no, I know - I'd have ended up quite an educated girl. Quite an educated woman. Because I did enjoy learning, and I didn't know that I enjoyed learning until I started learning - properly! I was always occupied with other things. So really, looking back, I think I did quite well to pick up what I did along the way, because I was always concentrating on other things.

<div align="right">(Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.23)</div>

For Beth, returning to adult education and enrolling on an adult literacy course is perceived as compensating for her schooling, and she explains: 'that's why I'm doing the English course now. I'm nearly 50 but I'm gonna get on and I'll pass it' (Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, p.22). As discussed in Chapter 7, Michal left university before completing his degree and feels a sense of failure, particularly as his immediate family members all have degrees. Like Beth, Michal explains that enrolling on the adult literacy course and achieving the Level 2 certificate goes some way to compensate for this:

> Sometimes I'll go home, back home, and you know I'll say, 'I speak English', and they say, 'Prove it'. And I don't have any certificates. Well now I can say, 'Look'.
>
> (Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.23)

There is no evidence within the twelve biographical neonarratives of participants perceiving of the Skills for Life discourse community as a threat. It is clear, however, that membership within the Skills for Life discourse community is perceived of in another way:

- as less important than personal discourse community memberships

Chapter 7 discussed how, for Jalisa, membership of an educational discourse community is perceived of as less important than her responsibilities in the home. For different reasons, Beth also considers her membership of the Skills for Life discourse community to be less important than other aspects of her life:

... if truth be known, Sandra, I'm so tired when I come home. I come home and I'm so tired because, you see, on my days off, I have to do the house, I have to do the shopping, I'm trying to fit in the course, and I'm *tired* … The thing is now, we're not one-to-one which we were before, because I'm in a group now, which doesn't bother me at all. But I feel more comfortable, or I feel I'll take the time out to do things like this [interview], at home. The truth is, because of the tiredness and everything, I can't be bothered. I can't be bothered going down there. But I'm always feeling overloaded. I feel like I've let [the tutor] down, and I hate that feeling because I never like to let anyone down, but I feel like I've let her down. That's how I feel about the course, because I'm just too tired or I'm too busy. You know, I mean, as I say on my days off I've got to do the house, I've got to do the shopping, I've got to have a *sleep* because I don't sleep at night, you see. When I wake up I'm tired, and I ache.

(Beth, Biographical Neonarrative, pages 33-35)

Importantly, then, participants often perceive of their membership of the Skills for Life discourse community in multiple ways. As discussed above, for example, Anne would like to gain paid employment in the future and, in this respect, perceives of membership of the Skills for Life discourse community as supporting her longer-term goals. In addition, Anne also considers it to compensate for the schooling of which she has no memory (Anne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.36).

To summarise, findings suggest that participants' assign one of two meanings to the literacy course:

1. The importance of being a member of the Skills for Life discourse community

2. The importance of gaining a literacy qualification, perceived of as enabling new membership opportunities within other discourse communities

To draw on Gee's (2011) concept of 'social good', discussed in Chapter 7, membership of the Skills for Life discourse community is often considered to be the social good. Often, however, the literacy qualification is important as this is perceived to provide opportunities for memberships within new official discourse communities and, in these examples, the qualifications are therefore considered to be the social good.

9.4   The meanings assigned to the literacy courses and the identities constructed for adult learners within the ILP neonarratives

Previous chapters have outlined the development of an analytical framework for this research consisting of four readings (see Chapter 6), and the findings that resulted from applying the readings to the biographical neonarratives (see Chapters 7 and 8). The following pages now outline the findings that resulted from applying the four readings to the twelve participants' ILP neonarratives.

9.5   ILP neonarrative Reading 1

As discussed in Chapter 6, this first reading of the ILP neonarrative differs to the first reading of the biographical neonarrative. While Reading 1 of the biographical neonarrative was carried out by participants and me, I played no part in Reading 1 of the ILP neonarrative.

Instead, the ILP neonarrative is designed, used and therefore informed by administrators, tutors and learners within the provider organisation. Informed by a social practices approach, Reading 1 of the biographical neonarrative entailed attending to and understanding participants' life stories. Informed by different conceptualisations of literacy, the following pages illustrate how the ILP neonarrative attends to only particular aspects of adult learners' lives.

9.6 ILP neonarrative Reading 2: Discourse Community Membership

Chapter 1 introduced 'Three ways to look at literacy' - the functional view, the cognitive approach, and the social practices perspective (St. Clair, 2010, p.13) - and illustrated how both the content and development of the Skills for Life strategy have been informed by functional and cognitive approaches. When conceptualised of as a discourse community, the 'common goals' (Swales, 1990) of the Skills for Life discourse community can therefore be understood as being informed by both the functional and cognitive approaches, as opposed to the social practices perspective of literacy. A social practices view of literacy privileges the embodied knowledge side of the Knowledge Conversation because, from the social practices perspective, 'Literacy does not just reside in people's heads as a set of skills to be learned, and it does not just reside on paper, captured as texts to be analysed. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people' (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.3). In contrast to this view, the official discourse community of Skills for Life does value objectified modes of knowing, and considers literacy to be a separate kind of knowledge: a 'set of skills' that 'reside[s] in people's heads'.

The Skills for Life discourse community requires its members to participate 'in objectified relations organized beyond the local particularities of [their] domestic consciousness' (Smith, 1999, p.4) and, as a result, local, embodied knowledges are disprivileged within this discourse community. The texts that make up an ILP are informed by predetermined criteria. This is characteristic of discourse communities whose goals are informed by the ruling relations because, as Smith (1990) explains, these goals 'are concerned with 'facts and events' that have been formulated because they are administratively relevant' to the discourse community's objectives, resulting in the production of objectified knowledge (p.15). The ILP can therefore be understood as fulfilling a number of important functions within the Skills for Life discourse community. These functions relate to Swales' (1990) discourse community characteristics, namely: carrying / communicating the Skills for Life community's common goals (concerned with skills and deficit) into LLN teaching and learning practices; playing an important role in ensuring community members share in the commonality of goal; a key strategy document which acts as an important mechanisms of intercommunication between community members; a '[line] of communication back to base', to ensure that the 'sharing of discursive practice occurs' between community members (Swales, 1990, p.25); a document which combines two textual genres – form-filling and assessment (including initial, diagnostic and summative) – to '[develop] and [continue] to develop discoursal expectations' within the community (Swales, 1990, p.26); both representing and containing community-specific lexis; and documenting the development of each learner's community membership. From this perspective, therefore, the ILP is a powerful co-ordinating document within the Skills for Life discourse community.

As discussed in the opening of this chapter, the meanings assigned to the literacy courses within participants' biographical neonarratives relate in some way to discourse community

membership: either to the Skills for Life discourse community membership itself or to the membership opportunities perceived by participants to be possible once they have achieved the adult literacy qualification. Analysis of the ILP neonarrative, however, reveals that the meanings assigned to literacy courses within this narrative representation are different to those assigned within the biographical neonarrative. The assumption inherent within the Skills for Life discourse community, and therefore within the ILP neonarrative, is that within their other discourse community memberships, learners are to some extent lacking literacy skills. Addressing the assumed skills deficit is therefore the central focus of Skills for Life discourse community and therefore the ILP neonarrative.

9.7   ILP neonarrative Reading 3: Voice

Within the ILP neonarratives, the meanings assigned to the literacy courses are concerned with adults' skills and assumed skills deficits and, as a result, the identities constructed for the learners are related to notions of skills and deficit. Reading 3 of the analytical framework outlined in Chapter 7 focuses on participant voice and this analysis reveals that the ILP neonarratives provide few, if any, opportunities for learners to write in the first person. Within the Provider 2 ILP neonarratives, there are several occasions in which learners are referred to in the first person, although these references are contained within the proformas and not written by the learners themselves. In the form entitled 'Summary of Training Needs Analysis, Initial Assessment and Learning Plan', for example, learning goals and objectives are accompanied with two columns against which the learner must tick either 'I can do this' or 'I still need to work towards this' (see Appendix 16). Here, learners are therefore represented in relation to what they can and cannot do.

This is also evident within learners' initial assessments. Although not present in all twelve ILP neonarratives, each learner completed an initial assessment, the results of which are referenced many times throughout their respective ILP neonarratives. When Suzanne enrolled on her literacy course, for example, an initial assessment was the first document that she was required to complete. On the front cover of the assessment, the three spaces provided are labelled 'Name', 'Total Score' and 'Level'. Suzanne wrote her name on the front and completed the assessment, aware that the test would result in a 'Score' and 'Level' being recorded for her. When marking the test, her tutor, Sophie, used a '1' to indicate Suzanne's correct answers and a '0' for incorrect answers. The total score recorded on the front of Suzanne's assessment is 69/72, with her level recorded as L1/L2. Similarly, for their initial assessment, three of tutor Penny's learners – Louise, Isla and Sandy – each completed a computer-based 'Move On Practice Test' which was marked out of 40. In addition, each completed a paper-based diagnostic test in which they were required to add punctuation to a piece of unpunctuated text (see Appendix 17). This assessment was marked out of 50 and also stated as a percentage. Initial assessment tools are therefore powerful texts in relation to learner identity as they represent adults' literacy abilities in terms of numerical marks and curriculum levels. Such numerical representation of learners' abilities inevitably results in deficit representations of the adult learners concerned. Of the curriculum levels 1 and 2, Suzanne says in interview 'I still don't understand [them] ... All I know is that a level 2 is equal to a GCSE C' (Suzanne, Interview 4 transcript, p.4). While many participants are unsure about the meaning of the curriculum levels, all understand that Level 2 is the highest level and that it is against this that their abilities are assessed.

Along with numerical marks and curriculum levels, participants' ILP neonarratives contain many references to criteria within the *Adult Literacy Core Curriculum* (Read-Write-Plus, 2001). Both Eleanor and Sophie, for example, use a 'Literacy Diagnostic Record Sheet' (see Appendix 18) to record their learners' abilities and learning progress in relation to the *Core Curriculum*. This document contains a separate column for each learner in the group and Eleanor explains in interview that she uses colour coding to record which aspects of the curriculum each of her learners are OK with (green ink) and which elements they need to work on (red ink). Eleanor also uses a pencilled 'P' to indicate which aspects of the literacy curriculum she judges to be relevant to the National Tests and that therefore require practice. In Sophie's 'Literacy Diagnostic Record Sheet', Suzanne's learning goals are determined against 14 different criteria from the *Adult Literacy Core Curriculum*. These incorporate all three aspects of the curriculum – Reading, Writing, and Speaking/Listening – and include, for example, 'Match text to purpose / context (Rt/L1.2)', 'Plan and draft writing (Wt/L1.1/2/3)' and 'Listen and respond (SLlr/L1). Eleanor's colour coding indicates that Suzanne was 'OK' in seven of the fourteen areas, and 'needed work' on seven. This quantifying of skills and ability is evident across all participants' ILP neonarratives and overlays a set of institutionally relevant levels and categories on learners' experiences and accounts (see Hamilton, 2012).

The 'Record of Individual Learning' sheet is a new proforma in Provider 1 and is therefore present in Eleanor's learners' ILPs but not in Sophie's (see Appendix 19). The document is divided into two sections: Initial and Diagnostic Assessment; and Learning Outcomes. The first section records the learner's initial assessment results and provides a 'Diagnostic Assessment Profile' of the curriculum level the learner is judged to be working at in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. Once again, learners' skills and abilities are represented within the ILP neonarrative in numerical form. Section 2 of this form, 'Learning

Outcomes', contains both group and individual learning outcomes. The group goals are reviewed at three different stages of the literacy course – 'Start', 'Mid' and 'End' – through the use of the following grades system:

A = I can do this well

B = I can just do this

C = I can nearly do this

D = I cannot do this

Eleanor has completed this on behalf of her learners - Anne, Jalisa, Lexi and Michal - and the functional and cognitive conceptualisations of literacy that underpin the Skills for Life discourse community goals are evident throughout this form. The learners' 'Group Learning Outcomes' are to:

- Use different reading strategies to find and obtain information

- Writing using suitable format and structure for different purposes

- Speaking and listening

These 'Group Learning Outcomes' are not handwritten but are word-processed and part of the proforma itself. The group goals are therefore predetermined and are the same for all the literacy learners who enrol at this provider. The ILP neonarratives, and the Skills for Life discourse community in which it operates, are concerned with criteria which are 'formulated because they are administratively relevant, not because they are significant first in the experience of those who live them' (Smith, 1990, p.15). From a social practices perspective, the context in which literacies are used – i.e. the specific practices within specific discourse communities – is important. As a result of the functional and cognitive approaches that inform the Skills for Life discourse community goals, however, context is not considered to

be important and this is evident within the ILP neonarrative. In relation to voice, the ILP neonarrative therefore provides few opportunities for learner voice and those permitted relate to skills and deficit.

9.8   ILP neonarrative Reading 4: Conversations

This reading draws on Gee's (2011) concept of 'Big "C" Conversation' which he defines as '[a debate] in society ... that large numbers of people recognize' (p.201). As discussed in Chapter 8, within their biographical neonarratives, all twelve participants engage in a particular Knowledge Conversation in which they perceive of two opposing epistemologies: local embodied knowledge and objectified knowledge (Smith, 2005). This Knowledge Conversation is also present within the ILP neonarrative. In Chapter 8, however, the women's biographical neonarratives were found to assert the importance of their local, embodied knowledge, whereas this reading of the ILP neonarrative found that it privileges objectified forms of knowledge.

Chapter 5 contains an exploration of literature concerned with different ways of knowing, literature which came to inform a key distinction in this research between personal and official discourse communities. These works all suggest an important epistemological disjunction which, as illustrated in the previous chapter, is central to the study's findings regarding participants' memberships within different discourse communities. This disjunction is explored by Smith (1990) who refers to it as the difference between how people 'experience the world and the concepts and theoretical schemes by which society's self-consciousness is inscribed' (p.13).

This disjunction is also illustrated by Gilligan (1993), as discussed in Chapter 5, who describes at length the example of an eleven year old boy, Jake, and an eleven year girl, Amy, who 'were asked to resolve' a dilemma 'devised by Kohlberg to measure moral development in adolescence', a dilemma in which 'a man named Heinz considers whether or not to steal a drug which he cannot afford to buy in order to save the life of his wife' (p.25):

> ... the different logic of Amy's response calls attention to the interpretation of the interview itself ... Amy is considering not *whether* Heinz should act in this situation ("*should* Heinz steal the drug?") but rather *how* Heinz should act in response to his awareness of his wife's need ("Should Heinz *steal* the drug?") ... Kohlberg's theory provides a ready response, manifest in the scoring of Jake's judgements a full stage higher than Amy's in moral maturity ... Since most of her responses fall through the sieve of Kohlberg's scoring system, her responses appear from his perspective to lie outside the moral domain.
>
> (Gilligan, 1993, p.31)

The literacies and knowledges that are disprivileged within the Skills for Life discourse community do not feature within the ILP neonarrative as they are not 'administratively relevant' (Smith, 1990, p.15) to the discourse community goals. As a result, like Amy in Gilligan's (1993) example, many learners' knowledges about literacy 'fall through the sieve of [the] scoring system' (Gilligan, 1993, p.31). In the Provider 2 ILP neonarratives, the 'Summary of Training Needs Analysis, Initial Assessment and Learning Plan' form (see Appendix 16) requires learners to document their 'prior knowledge / learning' in relation to 'Highest qualifications' and 'Work experience and any other skills including IT'. Any

knowledge which is not relevant to qualifications, work experience or IT is disprivileged and therefore not captured on the form.

To understand the knowledge that is disprivileged and which falls through the gaps in the ILP neonarrative, it is important to return to the biographical neonarrative. Chapter 8 illustrated the importance placed upon a particular type of local, embodied knowledge in participants' biographical neonarratives: that of knowing people and being known by people. This type of knowledge entails 'dialogue and interaction' (Belenky et al, 2007, p.18) and is closely linked with speaking and listening. In *Women's Ways of Knowing*, Belenky et al (1997) 'found that women repeatedly used the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development; and that the development of a sense of voice, mind, and self were intricately intertwined' (p.18):

> The tendency for women to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors suggesting speaking and listening is at odds with the visual metaphors (such as equating knowledge with illumination, knowing with seeing, and truth with light) that scientists and philosophers most often use to express to express their sense of mind ... Visual metaphors, such as "the mind's eye", suggest a camera passively recording a static reality and promote the illusion that disengagement and objectification are central to the construction of knowledge ... Unlike the eye, the ear operates by registering nearby subtle change. Unlike the eye, the ear requires closeness between subject and object. Unlike seeing, speaking and listening suggest dialogue and interaction.
>
> (Belenky et al, 2007, p.18)

Within the women participants' biographical neonarratives, there are repeated references to speaking and listening, highlighting the importance they place on 'dialogue and interaction' (Belenky et al, 2007, p.18). Isla, for example, cites '[spending] time talking to people' as an important part of Christmas (Isla, Biographical Neonarrative, p.6). Similarly, when discussing a previous job as a care assistant, Molly says:

> But I really, really did enjoy it. I *loved* listening to all their stories of their childhood and growing up and having children. Oh it was lovely, it really was nice getting to know them
>
> (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.29)

The importance placed upon speaking and listening in participant biographical neonarratives is somewhat at odds with the objectified knowledge privileged within official discourse communities. Both Molly and Jalisa, for example, discuss their experiences of participating in counselling courses, with Molly saying, 'I thought that was very good because you had to sit there and listen to somebody else talk and you had to keep so quiet. I found that so difficult! (*laughs*)' (Molly, Biographical Neonarrative, p.37). Like Molly, Jalisa found the instruction not to talk a difficult one to follow, eventually leaving the course:

> You were told that when you were befriending these people you had to just sit and listen, listen to what they say and just nod. I'm thinking, 'How do you do that?' You can't, can you? ... I kept saying to the counsellor, 'Can't you just reassure them that what they're feeling is normal?' 'Oh, no, no. You haven't to do anything like that'. So I'm thinking, 'Oh no'. I couldn't do that, not when someone's turning round to me and saying to me, 'I feel like killing my own

child'. I'd have to say, 'Sweetheart, I used to do that as well', you know! If you

can't reassure them, what's the point? Apparently you were there just to listen to

them but I've never wanted anyone just to *listen* to me, I've always wanted

someone to interact with my conversation.

(Jalisa, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.10-11)

In another example from her biographical neonarrative, Jalisa again emphasises the

importance of speaking and listening. In the personal writing which she brought to Interview

3, Jalisa tells the story of finding out that she was pregnant:

I walk out of the chemist with his words ringing in my ear. "You are pregnant".

Oh my god! What am I feeling? I have to sit down. I am scared. Excited.

Proud. I never thought that I would have a child ... At the hospital I had to fill a

form out, nothing seemed real. Then my name was called out ... The doctor asked

me if I minded a trainee observe. I didn't mind, I just wanted it to be over with.

Then they got an internal scanner. I just lied there trying not to listen as she

talked everything through with the trainee as to what she could see on the screen.

"That's the bladder, that's the womb, there is the foetus, look we can see the

heartbeat".

(Jalisa, Biographical Neonarrative, p.26)

Discussing her personal writing in Interview 3, Jalisa explains the importance of the nurse's

words, 'Look there's the heartbeat', and the way in which this informed her decision to keep

her baby:

[My personal writing's] just all about me deciding to keep [my baby] …

So, 'Look, there's the heartbeat'. Is that what stuck with you?

Yeah! 'Cause she were training another woman and I never would have heard that unless she were training another woman. If she hadn't have been training another woman, I don't know, I still don't think I would've gone through with it. I don't know.

(Jalisa, Biographical Neonarrative, p.28)

These examples illustrate how, throughout the biographical neonarratives, literacies associated with speaking and listening are metaphors for local, embodied knowledge. Within the ILP neonarratives, however, it is dominant literacies associated with reading and writing – as opposed to vernacular literacies rooted in speaking and listening – that are the focus. Importantly, within the biographical neonarratives, dominant literacies are often used as metaphors for objectified modes of knowing. When discussing her experiences of school, for example, Suzanne describes how, when she skived classes, teachers used books as an incentive for her to return to school:

I just didn't turn up to school. In the days I just got drunk with my friends at houses. And then the teachers in the end tried to bribe me to go back.

Bribe you with what?

Oh just school things, saying if you come to school we'll give you all these books

and I was like, 'No' … They didn't care less about us so I didn't care.

In this example, Suzanne sees books in a negative way as being representative of the objectified knowledge of the official discourse community of school. Books also take on a negative connotation within Beth's biographical neonarrative. When she had a nervous breakdown a few years ago, Beth's counsellor used books as a metaphor to help Beth understand what she was experiencing:

The way she put it to me was if I walked into a room and I had a hundred books stacked up high, my mum would say, 'Oh, sweetheart, you can't carry all them books', and she'd take a few off me. And then, my brothers would say, 'Beth, you can't carry all them books', and they'd take a few off me. Until in the end I'd have enough books that I could carry myself but everyone else would have taken some off me so that I could carry what was left. Well, she said with your emotions, what you've done is you've carried *all* those books. And because nobody can see them books, it's: 'Oh, Beth, yeah she'll sort that out. She's OK', 'Beth, yeah she'll sort it out', 'No, Beth's great, the last time I saw her'.

Not all references to books are negative and, in another example from Suzanne's biographical neonarrative, she explains how she often escapes to her local library:

[When I'm in the library] I feel like I'm just out of everything in my world, all the stresses. It just all goes. And when Tom's at school, that's two hours a day, so that's my space. Yeah I try and get here every week and get a few books out, as much as I can.

(Suzanne, Biographical Neonarrative, p.2)

Importantly, however, Suzanne suggests that the objectified knowledge represented by books is very different to her own 'world'. For Michal, books also represent objectified knowledge. The one personal item that Michal brought to Interview 4, for example, was his bible and he explains:

It's like all your life process, just studying [the bible]. I read the New Testament once and I'm now reading it a second time. I discovered more and other things that I didn't realise before. And now, people in church here, they are Christians some of them for forty years and they are still finding something out, something different, you know? It's a whole life process. You're never good enough. You have to always keep pushing yourself to go forward.

(Michal, Biographical Neonarrative, p.10)

Analysis of the ILP neonarratives illustrates how, within the Skills for Life discourse community, the knowing adult learner is subordinated 'to objectified forms of knowledge of society or political economy' (Smith, 2005, p.10). The ILP is an example of how, within an official discourse community, 'what people experience directly in their everyday / everynight world [can be converted] into forms of knowledge in which people as subjects disappear and

in which their perspectives on their own experiences are transposed and subdued by the magisterial forms of objectifying discourse' (Smith, 1990, p.4).

This chapter has so far detailed the findings resulting from applying the analytical framework readings outlined in Chapter 6 to the ILP neonarratives. In addition to the ILPs, however, this study also collected interview data from both learners and their tutors regarding the ILP paperwork. Importantly, as we shall see, participants were overwhelmingly positive about their ILP paperwork, suggesting the need for a deeper understanding of the ILP neonarrative. The following pages therefore draw on both learner and tutor interview data to develop an understanding of the ILP neonarrative that reaches beyond textual content to an understanding of the practices in which it is used. This is in line with both a social practice approach and with Smith's (2005) institutional ethnography.

9.9   Increasing textualisation

The increasing textualisation of social life, discussed in Chapter 2, provided a rationale for focusing on texts such as the ILP within research. In their biographical neonarratives, many participants make reference to the effects of increasing textualisation in their lives, particularly in relation to workplace discourse community memberships. Lexi, for example, discusses the amount of paperwork involved in securing some volunteer work (Lexi, Biographical Neonarrative, p.21). In another example, Beth explains that she left her management role in the retail sector because of increasing amounts of paperwork (p.33). As a school kitchen supervisor of seven years, Emily also discusses the increasing amounts of

work-related paperwork and how she had to take it home or stay late to complete it (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.36):

> Too much bureaucracy, isn't there? Like, going back to the school meal job, there was bureaucracy because you were working with children. It was coming out of your ears! You've got the EU here on one side of you, haven't you? You've got the council here on the other, you've got the school here and you're here in the middle trying to do your job, with all this bureaucracy going on. Well, it starts to get to the stage where it overtakes, doesn't it?
>
> (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.36)

Isla and Louise, both teaching assistants in the same school, refer to the increasing amounts of paperwork required of them in their roles. Louise explains that paperwork demands are putting her off taking a promotion:

> if you're [a Higher Level Teaching Assistant], all your lesson plans have to be the same as teachers' and be outstanding [for Ofsted]. At the moment that would be too much for me so I'm quite happy doing what I'm doing
>
> (Louise, Biographical Neonarrative, p.49)

Participants' interview data therefore suggest that the effects of increasing textualisation in the workplace are considered to be negative. These negative perceptions of workplace paperwork are often the result of participants' local, embodied knowledges being undermined by the objectified knowledge represented by the paperwork. Emily's mum, for example, was a housekeeper and it was by helping her mum in the kitchen as a child that Emily learned

many of her cookery skills. The following excerpt from Emily's biographical neonarrative captures Emily's feelings about this particular local, embodied knowledge:

> My mum was an excellent cook. Plain cook, but excellent. She could do anything, anything. Oh, her scones were to die for. To die for, they were, my mum's scones. She never weighed a thing. Straight in the bowl. I can't do it by eye ... my mum would be doing homemade scones and we used to get off the bus and used to race down the drive, God Almighty! 'Mum, have you saved me one? Mum, have you saved me one?' Yeah, she'd saved you one! She'd give you this hot cup of tea and you'd have this scone and the butter would be melting. Oh it would be lovely!
>
> (Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.16)

It is evident throughout Emily's biographical neonarrative that the knowledge learned from her mum has been useful throughout her own life, both in the home and the workplace. The increasing amounts of paperwork experienced by Emily in her seven years as a school kitchen supervisor, however, began to undermine this as she could no longer write her own menus or follow her own recipes:

> You got little folders with this and little folders with that. You had to read about this and you had to read about that. And then new recipe books came out ... You had the health visitor from the council, the health visitor from [another agency] ... Then your boss came in. You couldn't say, 'Well, I've made this today' ... I'd make fresh sponge say from margarine, eggs, butter, sugar, all that. Then you'd open their recipe book and they'd tell you to use packet stuff. And also all these

cooks use all the packet stuff and then me, because I'm probably working more

hard to keep within my budget, will make the fresh stuff. The kids love it.

Somebody else comes along, gives them this packet stuff while I'm not there.

Anyway that's up to them isn't it but that's how *I* feel. I feel bureaucracy's

coming out of our ears.

<div align="right">(Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.35-37)</div>

The increasing amounts of work-related paperwork in Alice's school kitchen also represent

objectified modes of knowledge:

I came out before and thought, 'Did I shut that bathroom window? I *may* have

done'. You know, when I do it, I've got to think, 'Right, I've shut that',

otherwise I can't store that information. You do things subconsciously and

you're not aware. It's automatic. I'm not good like that, my memory's terrible

like that. When I used to come out of work, I used to have to lock up every day.

Well, if I'd got money in the safe, say over the weekend if we ever left money in

the safe, I used to have to get somebody else to check that safe door with me so

that *I* would come away knowing I've done that. And I used to hang my pinny -

because we used to have a gas isolator and you just used to pull the bar down -

and I used to make sure that I hung my pinny on that *every* night so I would know

that I'd shut it down. And it was just a way of me remembering that I'd done it,

so I didn't come home and myther myself stupid saying, 'Have I done it?' It's

like that paperwork I've got to look at. It's prices I've got to remember and this,

that and the other ... [my manager] had said, 'Right, go home now and switch

off', and I couldn't for the first few days. I kept dreaming about it and I thought,

'This is awful, I'm going to have to stop this'. And it was because it was out on

the table, this pile of paperwork.

<div align="right">(Alice, Biographical Neonarrative, p.p.54-55)</div>

Findings therefore suggest that, within employment-related official discourse communities, participants view workplace paperwork in negative ways, associating it with objectified knowledge. The following pages explore participants' perceptions of the ILP paperwork within the official discourse community of Skills for Life.

9.10   Learners, Tutors and the ILP Paperwork

As discussed in Chapter 5, in the final life history interview participants were encouraged to read and discuss their ILP paperwork. In addition, interviews were carried out with the four literacy tutors to discuss their ILP paperwork practices. This interview data was analysed using the same framework readings applied to both the biographical and ILP neonarratives.

There are many differences in the content and use of ILP paperwork across the two providers. For the learners enrolled at Provider 1, the only aspect of their ILP on which they could reflect was the initial assessment process as they did not participate in the completion of the other documents. By contrast, however the amount of ILP paperwork in Provider 1 did not go unnoticed by the learners, with Sandy commenting that 'we never done much bar form-filling for the first week'. Despite these differences, as illustrated in the previous pages of this chapter, the ILP neonarratives across the two providers provide deficit representations of

the twelve participants in this study, subordinating the knowing adult learner 'to objectified forms of knowledge of society or political economy' (Smith, 2005, p.10).

In contrast to the paperwork associated with other official discourse community memberships, however, participants' perceptions of their ILPs are overwhelmingly positive. In interview, participants were accepting of the ILP paperwork and spoke about it in positive terms. When asked, for example, how they felt about completing the form containing the two categories 'I can do this' and 'I still need to work on this', Beth and Emily responded as follows:

> ...it was fantastic because it makes you realise what you are good at and what you're not, do you know what I mean? Because there's no point in doing things that you are good at and you *know* you can do.
>
> (Beth, Interview 4 transcript)

> it's to give them an indication as to what you're learning abilities are, isn't it?
>
> (Emily, Interview 4 transcript)

As illustrated in Chapter 2, we live in a 'textually mediated world' (Smith, 1999) in which texts have become ubiquitous, and participants' interview data suggest that paperwork such as the ILP is expected of an official discourse community. Findings suggest, however, that it is the practices surrounding the completion of the ILPs which are important. More specifically, the practices in which the ILPs are used appear to provide opportunities to challenge the deficit view represented by these texts and to assert the importance of local, embodied knowledge. Importantly, data suggest that these opportunities are taken up by both

the learners and their tutors. This is illustrated in the two very different ways in which ILPs are used in Providers 1 and 2.

9.10.1 Provider 1

Sophie and Eleanor, the two tutors based in Provider 1, consider themselves to be experienced literacy tutors and have strong views about the ILP paperwork which consequently inform their use of it. Sophie and Eleanor's interview data suggest that the emphasis placed upon the ILP as an auditable document within their organisation has reduced significantly in recent years, allowing them to do two things: reduce the content of the ILP, and change the way in which it is used:

> I think at one point we suddenly had a *lot* [of paperwork], when the Core Curriculum came in. And then we thought, 'You know what? This needs to be streamlined'. So in the beginning, when it was introduced, you think, 'Oh, we'd better do this', and then your confidence grows with it. We realised what was disposable, what's not disposable, what the inspectors are looking for and what they're not bothered about – and you streamline it. We used to have booklets which were quite onerous really.
>
> (Eleanor interview transcript, p.9)

As a result, only a few documents make up learners' ILP neonarratives in Provider 1. Although all learners are required to complete an initial assessment, they have no further

involvement in the completion of the ILP paperwork as Eleanor and Sophie have removed the ILP paperwork from their classrooms and complete it themselves outside of class time.

Many aspects of the ILP paperwork is perceived by Eleanor and Sophie to be time-consuming and of little real use, with Sophie explaining that 'you can't be thinking about making your lessons really, really interesting and dynamic because you're wasting so much time on lesson plans and schemes of work and the bits of paper attached to it'. Earlier sections of this chapter have focused on how the ILP neonarratives produce deficit representations of the adult literacy learners. Further analysis of Sophie and Eleanor's interview data, however, suggests that they perceive these deficit assumptions to extend to them as literacy tutors. Both Eleanor and Sophie, for example, indicate that they feel undermined by the ILP paperwork, with their knowledge of teaching and of their learners being undermined. Several times throughout her interview, for example, Sophie suggests that the ILP is useful only for new teachers 'to have a structure until [they] get a little bit more experience'. When discussing Core Curriculum referencing, Sophie says:

> ... I know when somebody can't do this, that or the other. But I'm a great
> believer in the Core Curriculum. I think it's a fantastic curriculum to have. But
> not if the *coding* controls you, so that every blummin bit of paper has to have that
> on. And, I must admit, we've moved right away from it.
>
> (Sophie interview transcript, p.15)

This section therefore focuses on how Eleanor and Sophie challenge the deficit views inherent within the Skills for Life discourse community through the paperwork practices they employ, enabling them to highlight the importance of their own local, embodied knowledges.

As experienced tutors, Eleanor and Sophie reject the 'inexpert' positioning of the ILP by taking control and removing aspects of the ILP paperwork they consider unnecessary. Both tutors, however, use the Initial Assessment because it supports, rather than undermines, their knowledge of their learners:

... in very few cases does [the Initial Assessment] tell me something that makes my judgement wrong. It confirms what I'm thinking because I pick up from listening to people telling me who they are, what they've achieved, why they haven't achieved it.

Do you record that anywhere?

No, not really. I just listen. I just listen to them, have a conversation with them and I can get the feeling of what's coming through and I can hear the way they're saying things, how they express it and I'll ask a few questions about, 'What if you did this? What would happen?' and everything, and I'm just listening to the answers, and I don't record it. I think that would be too much as well, and I don't write it down because I see so many that I'd spend all my time writing it down. But I think that's experience. I would *not* have been like that when I first joined, I would have wanted something much firmer.

(Sophie interview transcript, p.12)

Eleanor and Sophie's interview data reveals a perception of the ILP paperwork as controlling, rather than enabling, their work as literacy tutors. In interview, both Eleanor and Sophie discussed how the content of the ILP is revised and reduced on an ongoing basis:

> ... we'd have a team meeting and say, 'Let's look at these forms again. Are they OK?' Yeah, you'd feed back to the Section Leader for the Literacy and say, 'I'm finding these problems with the form. Let's have a meeting, let's discuss it and see if we can get something fresh'. So it's quite fluid.
>
> (Eleanor interview transcript, p.8)

Eleanor and Sophie both discuss the learning reviews in the ILP and how, in the paperwork review, these were altered to be less time-consuming:

> ... when you're doing the reviews at the end of each term, sometimes it just doesn't work out in terms of your time that you can give everybody time to be reviewed *individually*. We've still got [space for reviews], but we've made it smaller. And it's more in our hands as well where we don't need the student contribution. They *do* need to contribute, but verbally and then we record it more.
>
> (Sophie interview transcript, p.12)

Sophie discusses a tension between the natural reviewing of learning with their students in conversation 'as we go along' and the pressure to record this in written form. The following excerpt from Sophie's transcript again indicates that she views ILP paperwork as necessary only for those teachers who need it:

'How do you feel about that? What do you think about what you learnt today? What *did* you learn today?' It's something that a teacher, a *good* teacher, just does all the time. It's not something that you can tell somebody to do, I don't think. If you're not doing it, you're not much of a teacher really. And you're always checking learning and it just *happens*. Maybe it *doesn't* just happen and that's why they've had to implement it ... [My discussions with Suzanne have] happened and they were relaxed and informal and informative. But, how do you measure that and capture it? I don't know.

(Sophie interview transcript, p.15)

To summarise, the tutor interview data suggest that lengthy ILPs are a hindrance to their teaching and undermine their experience. By revising the content of the ILP and removing it from their classrooms, these two tutors challenge this and 'can now get on with what [they] need to do'.

9.10.2 Provider 2

In contrast to Provider 1, the ILPs used by Christine and Penny in Provider 2 are lengthy documents and bring together a number of policy documents and proformas. Also unlike Provider 1, in Christine and Penny's organisation the ILP is considered to be an important funding document. Both Christine and Penny discuss how different forms within the ILP, and even different aspects of the same form, are the result of different accountability demands. In Provider 2, the ILP paperwork is visible throughout all lessons and requires ongoing completion by both tutor and learner.

Although using the ILP in different ways, Christine and Penny share Eleanor and Sophie's concerns about the ILP

Christine, for example, says that it 'doesn't necessarily represent some of the conversations that we've had within the group'. Discussing the learner work logs completed in each lesson, for example, she distinguishes between the '*actual* feedback' that happens in her classroom and the feedback captured within the paperwork:

> There is space for tutor comments but, again, I don't fill it in after every session. Students would get maybe one comment or two comments throughout a course. Maybe that's a bit slack on my part but it's not like they don't get feedback during the course. So continually, through the course, I'll be giving them *actual* feedback, *verbal* feedback.
>
> (Christine interview transcript, p.10)

Like Sophie in Provider 1, Christine therefore also expresses frustration at the pressure to record what is spoken. In interview, Penny also suggests that it can be difficult to evidence progress in adult literacy teaching and learning:

> We were looking at ways of how we measure progress ... it seemed easier in Maths to *measure* progress. The only thing I thought I could do it in would be punctuation really because the rest of it, it's much more organic.
>
> (Penny interview transcript, p.10)

While the interview data illustrate shared concerns between the tutors working in Providers 1 and 2, their different uses of the ILP result in them challenging the objectified modes of knowing in different ways. Importantly, in Provider 2, both tutors and learners are involved in the ILP paperwork practices. This section therefore focuses on how both the tutors and learners in Provider 2 challenge the deficit representations of the Skills for Life discourse community and assert the importance of their local, embodied knowledges.

Both Christine and Penny use a 'Detailed Review Log' in their ILPs to support a dialogue between themselves and their learners (see Appendix 20):

> ... because I was used to working that way in my previous job, I just find [the Detailed Review Log] a really useful dialogue and when I'm planning the session, I'll look and see what they've said, and respond. And I encourage them to jot down things, like if they want a bit more on apostrophes, or whatever, just to write it here and then I can pick that up. I make sure I either put something in their folder or that we come back to it in the session. Otherwise, you lose a lot of information.
>
> (Penny interview transcript, p.6)

Each of their learners made reference to this section of the ILP and appear to embrace it as an opportunity to respond to and counter the objectified knowledge privileged within the *Skills for Life* discourse community:

> ... there's little comments for confidence. And that's another thing, obviously you can see that she's reading it every week, and she'd put 'Welcome to the

course' and nice little comments. 'I can see your confidence is growing'. Little comments like that. 'Well done' ... It's like when you're at school or working with children, they always say you should put a positive comment. I always write comments on their work because they *do*, they like to look and read, so that's nice. You're being acknowledged.

<div align="right">(Louise, Interview 4, p.7)</div>

[Penny] gave you your file in the beginning of the session, you'd look through it and you'd read them and that sort of gave you that little bit of a spur on for that session ... I think a lot of it is confidence 'cause I know I hadn't done so well with English and Maths in school, a lot of it was a confidence builder for me as well, going in and doing the English. So to see some of her comments, it was sort of, 'Oh right, I'm spurred on ready for tonight' ... It's the little things that seem to bump you up.

<div align="right">(Sandy, Interview 4, pp.10-11)</div>

This 'Learning and Review log' I did find very interesting and it made me realise what I was achieving without knowing it, do you know what I mean? I mean here I've put, 'I feel like I've learnt a lot today about paragraphs' and I felt as if I was achieving ... when you write something down, that's when you realise what it is you've learnt, if that makes sense? Because you don't realise it until you start writing it down and then you think, 'God, do you know what? I really did enjoy that'

<div align="right">(Beth, Interview 4, pp.12-13)</div>

Although accepting of the ILP paperwork itself, interview data suggest there are a variety of ways in which participants challenge the notions of deficit inherent within the Skills for Life discourse community by emphasising the importance of local, embodied knowledge. Isla, Louise and Sandy, for example, work within education discourse communities and draw on these memberships when discussing their own ILP neonarratives. Commenting on the short format of this particular literacy course, for example, Isla said: 'That's long enough for us, because most of us were coming with some experience anyway, or some kind of a qualification'. Isla, Louise and Sandy also often related the content of their course to their own activities with children within their workplace discourse communities:

> Penny did give us some things – I think that was 'two cots, two mattresses', she used to say to us ... I do the same in school when I do, we do tricky words like 'Said' which is 'Sally Anne is Dancing', and 'Because': 'Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants', and things like that ... So not only were we learning to better ourselves but taking away skills that we could use with the children. Because some of the paperwork that we'd done on capitals, I took a blank copy in to the school and with the year 2s and 3s, they incorporated it into the Literacy session. So it's been *really* helpful.
>
> (Sandy, interview 4 transcript, p.10)

Similarly, when discussing the learning styles questionnaire, Louise explained:

> This is what I thought was really good because we do this with the children, because I think it's really important. The teacher I work with, when he does a lesson plan he caters for all needs and I think it *is* important ... But [Penny] was

good, because she did like little activities. And they say as well that, when you're

learning, it's always good to pair off and discuss. That's what they do with the

children quite a lot in school, pair up and discuss with each other – and that's

what she did.

<div align="right">(Louise, Interview 4 transcript, p.5)</div>

There are many other ways in which, when discussing the ILP neonarrative, participants

challenge the privileging of objectified modes of knowing within the *Skills for Life* discourse

community. Isla, for example, explains how she drew upon her local, embodied knowledge

when completing the National Test:

A lot of [the test] was reading through. I think I had a lot about York, like a

leaflet on York asking you 'Where could you find so-and-so?'. A lot of it was

picking information out, which I'm not too bad at. A couple of times they'd

throw in something like, 'On line so-and-so, where should a punctuation thing

be?' Or, 'Which would be the best word to put in the gap?' They're not too bad

because they're multiple choice but sometimes when you get a multiple choice

thing, you go with your instincts and then you start to look and think, 'Oh, that's

not right', and then you start to change it, don't you, and really you should stick

with what you thought first. Usually it's quite right, isn't it?

<div align="right">(Isla, Interview 4 transcript, p.13)</div>

Similarly, when discussing her experience of practising for and taking the National Test,

Louise emphasises the importance her own local, embodied experience:

... they were awful my practice tests. All of them. But yet I did really well in my real one. But I think one of the weeks, I'd had a bad day. I know that sounds really silly but you know when you just can't get something in your head and you're just having a bad day, and I was sat in this room and it was boiling hot.

(Louise, Interview 4 transcript, p.8)

As a result of doing the literacy course, Emily explains that 'You question yourself more about what you're writing'. The following quote from Emily's final interview, however, undermines the conceptualisation of literacy that is inherent within the *Skills for Life* discourse community's common goals:

[My husband] had written a letter to somebody and I said, 'You've got spelling mistakes in this, Bob'. He said, 'What do you mean?' and I said, 'You don't spell *certainly* like that'. 'Oh! Oh! Why, how've I spelt it wrong?' 'There's not an *e* at the end there' ... 'Oh alright'. And he said, 'Well, it's worked'. Because it's a letter he sent to somebody because he's got some work to do and they weren't passing him – they have to pass off a piece of paper and they weren't doing it, so he wrote them a bit of a snotty letter really. Anyway, within half an hour of receiving his fax, they were on the phone.

(Emily, final interview transcript, p.20)

As she had recently retired, Emily was the only learner enrolled on the literacy course not to be in employment. Again, Emily's reasons for not enrolling on a numeracy course undermine the conceptualisation of literacy that is inherent within the *Skills for Life* discourse community's common goals:

Well, I haven't got a lot of use for Maths, if you understand what I mean. Whereas all this [in the literacy course], whether you're working or not, you need to use, because you need to spell, you need to punctuate it if you're writing a piece of work, and you need correct use of grammar because you're conducting yourself in speaking to people, aren't you? Not only do you write grammar down, but you speak it.

(Emily, Biographical Neonarrative, p.48)

As illustrated in earlier chapters, a key characteristic of a discourse community is that 'members must share common goals' (Swales, 1990). Participants' comments about their ILP neonarratives, however, suggest that while they may complete the paperwork accordingly, they also find ways to challenge some of the assumptions that underpin these common goals. While the ILP neonarrative can be understood as a powerful text in ensuring that members share the discourse community's common goals (Swales, 1990), findings therefore suggest that participants do not necessarily share these goals.

In interview, for example, Emily explains that her colleague had talked her into doing the literacy course because she 'wanted to do it and she couldn't drive so she couldn't get here (*laughs*)'. In her ILP, however, Emily has cited her reasons as wanting to improve her spelling, punctuation and grammar. For Isla, an opportunity to enrol on a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) course and have promotion opportunities was central to her reason for enrolling on the literacy course. Isla explains that in the first session, page 1 of the ILP required her to record her reasons for doing the literacy course:

... we couldn't really put 'Just to enrol on the HLTA course'. I think [the tutor] wanted something else! (*laughs*) That's why we've put, 'Be more confident with literacy' ... But once we started going through the course, I *did* realise there were gaps there as well. Little things you'd forgotten, you know? Semi-colons – when to use them in the right place. And another one that if I don't think *properly*, the likes of 'your' and the you are 'you're' – using that in the wrong place. You know, that type of thing – it sort of focused me back to doing that. The use of 'too' and 'to' ... lot of little things ...

(Isla, Interview 4, p.13)

Discussing the learning styles questionnaire, Isla also explains that her score suggested she was a 'visual' learner but that she disagreed with this:

Because visual, to me, is just reading it and I can read stuff til I'm blue in the face and half the time it won't make any difference to me. So that was quite strange ... I think most of us came out as visual and there was only a couple of people that thought they were a visual learner there. We all thought we were different things. It just shows you, doesn't it? But somebody was saying now that they're trying to do away with all that because they're saying it's rubbish ... I can't remember when it was but, before the holidays, somebody [at work] was saying, 'That's all rubbish that'. He'd read something that it doesn't matter.

(Isla, Interview 4, p.15)

This section has explored how, while participating in the Skills for Life discourse community, both literacy learners and their tutors find ways of challenging the privileging of

certain epistemologies above others in this official discourse community. There are numerous examples in the interview data of both learners and tutors emphasising the importance of their local, embodied knowledges. These knowledges are associated with knowing people and place an importance on speaking and listening, which is at odds with the importance placed on writing within the ILP neonarrative.

9.11   Chapter summary

This chapter began by returning to Key Finding 1 presented in Chapter 7 and illustrated how this is useful in understanding participants' memberships within the official discourse community of Skills for Life. As this chapter has shown, findings suggest that participants often perceive of their membership of the Skills for Life discourse community in multiple ways, assigning one of two very different meanings to their enrolment on an Adult Literacy programme. This chapter has highlighted the complexity of the ILP - a document which, one the one hand, supports the goals of the Skills for Life discourse community while, on the other hand, provides learners and tutors with opportunities to challenge the notions of deficit inherent within the objectified knowledge of this community.

Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusions

10.1   Introduction

Dorothy Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' provided an important starting point for this research and, in particular, the distinction between 'the ruling relations' and 'the standpoint of people'. The ruling relations are the 'extraordinary yet ordinary complex of relations that are textually mediated, that connect us across space and time and organize our everyday lives – the corporations, government bureaucracies, academic and professional discourses, mass media, and the complex of relations that interconnect them' (Smith, 2005, p.10). Standpoint, however, 'creates a point of entry into discovering the social that does not subordinate the knowing subject to objectified forms of knowledge of society or political economy' (Smith, 2005, p.10). This study has focused on two narrative representations of adult literacy learners, representations which are informed by Smith's (2005) concepts of 'the ruling relations' and 'the standpoint of people'. The first narrative representation is that of the Skills for Life Strategy as contained in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) paperwork held by providing institutions about their adult literacy learners. As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the adult literacy ILP is a product of an educational policy and is therefore rooted within the ruling relations (Smith, 2005). The second narrative representation is in the form of adult learners' biographical narratives, constructed from life history interview data and beginning from the 'standpoint of people' (Smith, 2005). Importantly, both the ILP and biographical narratives are acknowledged in this study to be neonarratives and are referred to as such from Chapter 6 onwards (see Chapter 6).

Smith (2005) developed her sociology as a result of her unease at 'the deep opposition between the mainstream sociology I had learned as a graduate student ... and what I had discovered in the women's movement' (p.1). This doctoral research was developed in response to a similar unease: that the conceptualisations of literacy inherent within adult literacy policy are out-of-step with adult literacy learners' daily lives and the literacy practices found within these. Briefly, the 'Three ways to look at literacy' (St. Clair, 2010, p.13) are the functional view, the cognitive approach, and the social practices perspective, and these different conceptualisations of literacy are discussed in detail in Chapter 1. The Skills for Life Strategy and consequently the ILP neonarrative are informed by functional and cognitive approaches to literacy. In contrast, the biographical methodology employed in this study, and participants' biographical neonarratives, are informed by the social practices perspective. As the findings show, these different conceptualisations result in different narrative representations of the participants in this study.

10.2   Identities and epistemologies

Issues of identity are at the centre of this study and it is important and intentional that the research has focused upon two distinctly different narrative representations of adult literacy learners. Different conceptualisations of literacy inform particular representations and subjectivities of adult literacy learners which, in turn, results in the privileging of particular epistemologies. Early in the thesis, the two narrative representations were acknowledged as representing and producing different knowledges, informing the extent to which each neonarrative might be privileged. Indeed, a starting point of this study was that the ILP neonarrative produces and privileges institutional kinds of knowing and, in the process,

devalues vernacular knowledges. The choice of these two particular narrative representations allowed for an exploration of issues of identity, addressing the following research questions:

9. Within their Skills for Life narratives, what identities are constructed for the adult learners?

10. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do the adults construct for themselves?

11. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within each of the two narratives?

12. What are the similarities and differences between the identities constructed within each representation?

13. What are the similarities and differences between the meanings assigned to the literacy programme within each representation?

14. What implications do these similarities and differences have for practice, policy and research?

The following pages refer to each of the research questions in summarising the research findings.

10.3   The importance of discourse communities

The grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) adopted in this study is in line with Smith's (2005) 'institutional ethnography', a method of inquiry in which 'The researcher does not know in advance where her or his investigation will go' (p.68). Chapter 5 provides

a detailed account of the ways in which I engaged with participants and their data in the fieldwork stages of the research, and how these experiences came to inform subsequent analytical decisions. It was in the fieldwork stage of the study that the concept of 'discourse community' (Swales, 1990) came to be important, as I began to understand the experiences being narrated by participants as representing their participation within particular discourse communities.

In their life history interviews, participants made reference to memberships within a number of discourse communities ranging from families, friends, neighbourhood and social networking to healthcare, religion, education, employment and law enforcement services. I came to understand these different discourse communities using a particular distinction – that of personal and official discourse communities. This distinction is detailed in Chapter 5 and, as the findings show, it became fundamental to this study.

The importance placed by participants on their memberships within personal discourse communities first became evident in the ways in which they approached the life history interview tasks (see Chapter 7). As a result, participants' biographical neonarratives are dominated by the importance of these particular discourse community memberships, namely family and friendship groups. Importantly, however, analysis of the twelve neonarratives revealed that participants negotiate memberships within many different personal and official discourse communities throughout their lives, and that these memberships often overlap and inform one-another.

10.4   Summary of Key Findings

Focusing on both personal and official discourse community membership led to the first two key findings regarding participants' memberships within discourse communities, as represented in the biographical neonarratives:

10.4.1 Key Finding 1: Memberships within official discourse communities are perceived of in different ways

Participants' responses to official discourse community memberships are informed by their perceptions of how this affects their most valued personal discourse community memberships. There are three ways in which participants perceive of memberships within official discourse communities:

- as supporting or complementing their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

- as compensating for their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

- as threatening their most valued personal discourse community membership(s)

10.4.2 Key Finding 2: Perceptions of official discourse community memberships inform participant responses to membership opportunities

Throughout their lives, participants meet with opportunities to participate in a number of official discourse communities. Importantly, their perceptions of official discourse community memberships inform how they respond to these opportunities, with participants responding in the following two ways:

- By welcoming memberships
- By rejecting memberships

As highlighted in Chapter 7, the giving and receiving of care and support is at the heart of personal discourse community goals. Care is also important in understanding the interplay between participants' memberships within personal and official discourse communities. As will be discussed in the coming pages, within participants' biographical neonarratives, care represents a particular type of knowledge that is privileged in some discourse communities and not in others.

10.4.3 Key Finding 3: Participants' perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships are epistemologically informed

Knowledge is a dominant theme across all twelve biographical neonarratives with each participant conceptualising knowledge in relation to two distinct types: theoretical and practical. Within their biographical neonarratives, participants position themselves in relation to these two particular ways of knowing, which they conceptualise as opposing epistemological types (see Chapter 8). Drawing on Smith's (2005) terminology, the two epistemologies are referred to throughout the thesis as 'objectified knowledge' and 'local, embodied knowledge'. As a result of the two opposing types of knowledge referred to within the biographical neonarratives, these references are considered representative of one particular Knowledge Conversation. This conceptualisation draws on Gee's (2011) tool of inquiry, 'Big "C" Conversations' which, he explains, are representative of 'debates in society' that are widely recognizable 'both in terms of what "sides" there are to take in such debates and what sorts of people tend to be on each side' (p.201). The Knowledge Conversation identified within participants' biographical neonarratives is important in understanding participation across different discourse communities. By engaging in this Knowledge Conversation within their biographical neonarratives, participants in this study can be understood as positioning themselves, and others, in relation to these two perceived ways of knowing. How participants position themselves and others in relation to this Knowledge Conversation is also important in understanding the representation of participant identities within the biographical neonarrative.

Each discourse community has its own broadly agreed set of common goals (Swales, 1990). Drawing on the distinction between official and personal discourse communities, each

discourse community can be understood as being influenced by and as producing different epistemologies. Official discourse community goals, for example, are informed by the ruling relations and are concerned with 'facts and events' that have been formulated because they are administratively relevant' to the discourse community's objectives, resulting in the production of objectified knowledge (Smith, 1990, p.15). In contrast, the texts at work within personal discourse communities represent issues that 'are significant first in the experience of those who live them' (Smith, 1990, p.15), representing and producing local, embodied knowledge.

10.4.4 Key Finding 4: Membership of the Skills for Life discourse community is perceived of by participants in multiple ways, informing the meanings they assign to the literacy course

There are three ways in which participants perceive of their memberships within the official discourse community of Skills for Life:

- As supporting or complementing their future plans and goals
- As compensating for other discourse community memberships
- As less important than personal discourse community memberships

As a result, participants assign one of two meanings to the literacy course:

3. The importance of being a member of the Skills for Life discourse community

4. The importance of gaining a literacy qualification, perceived of as enabling new membership opportunities within other discourse communities

To draw on Gee's (2011) concept of 'social good', discussed in Chapter 7, membership of the Skills for Life discourse community is often considered to be the social good. Often, however, the literacy qualification is important as this is perceived to provide opportunities for memberships within new official discourse communities and, in these examples, the qualifications are therefore considered to be the social good.

The meanings assigned to the literacy courses within participants' biographical neonarratives relate in some way to discourse community membership: either to the Skills for Life discourse community membership itself or to the membership opportunities perceived by participants to be possible once they have achieved the adult literacy qualification. The meanings assigned to literacy courses within the ILP neonarrative are, however, quite different. The assumption inherent within the Skills for Life discourse community, and therefore within the ILP neonarrative, is that within their other discourse community memberships, learners are to some extent lacking literacy skills. Addressing the assumed skills deficit is therefore the central focus of the Skills for Life discourse community and therefore of the ILP neonarrative. As outlined in Chapter 1, this research was developed in response to concerns around the direction that Adult Literacy policy is taking in the UK, with its increasingly narrow focus on skills and employment. As government funding has increased for Skills for Life, for instance, so too has the emphasis on accreditation-related targets, with all available literacy provision now linked to nationally recognised qualifications. Importantly, however, findings from this study suggest that participants assign

very different meanings to their participation in the Skills for Life discourse community than is assumed within that community's common goals.

10.5   Issues of gender

Gender was not an intended starting point of this study's focus and, while Smith's (2005) 'sociology for people' was originally referred to as 'women's standpoint theory', it 'does not identify a position or a category of position, gender, class, or race within society' (Smith, 2005, p.10). Smith's (2005) sociology has therefore been referred to throughout this thesis as a 'sociology for people' and 'a standpoint of people'. Of the twelve learner-participants in this study, however, eleven are women and findings highlight some important issues regarding gender, knowledge and identity.

Of the twelve participants in the study, Michal is the only male, and the only participant to position himself on the objectified side of the Knowledge Conversation. Drawing on excerpts of participants' neonarratives, Chapter 8 illustrates how the eleven women in the study identify with and position themselves on the local, embodied side of the Knowledge Conversation. Within their personal discourse communities, the women talk about their local, embodied knowledge in terms of expertise. Within official discourse communities, however, they do not consider this knowledge to have parity with objectified knowledge. As a result, participants do not consider people positioned on the two opposing sides of the conversation to be equals within official discourse communities. Tensions arise as a result of the disparity between participants' local, embodied knowledges and the objectified modes of knowing privileged within the official discourse communities (see Chapter 8). This disparity

and the tensions that arise as a result are fundamental in understanding participants' perceptions of and responses to official discourse community memberships.

For those women who are members of workplace discourse communities, the transfer of their local, embodied knowledge into their workplace discourse communities is considered important, namely a specific aspect of local, embodied knowledge: knowing and being known by people. Although participants perceive of objectified forms of knowledge as being privileged within official discourse communities, they challenge this by stressing the importance of this particular epistemological aspect – knowing and being known by people – within official discourse communities.

On the surface of things, by referring to a particular Knowledge Conversation in their biographical neonarratives and by positioning themselves on a particular side of it, the women participants in this study appear to represent themselves as inexpert. By attending to the voices within this particular Knowledge Conversation, however, participants' biographical neonarratives are heard and understood in a different way. The life stories contained within the biographical neonarratives narrate participants' memberships across numerous personal and official discourse communities. While the women are aware that official discourse communities privilege objectified forms of knowledge, their stories assert the importance of their local, embodied knowledges within their official discourse community memberships. In doing so, the women challenge the disjuncture they experience between the knowledge of value within their personal discourse communities and that which is privileged within official discourse communities. Findings therefore reveal that, in fact, all participants represent themselves as experts, irrespective of which side they take in this particular Knowledge Conversation.

The literature referenced in Chapter 5 addresses different conceptualisations of knowledge. Belenky et al (1997), for example, 'describe five different perspectives from which women view reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority' (p.3), and suggest there is an important relationship between epistemologies and identities. Hatt's (2007) research participants distinguish between 'book smart' and 'street smart', with an emphasis on the importance of the official discourse community of school as a site in which knowledge is socio-culturally produced and then 'embodied through academic identity' (p.146). Luttrell's (1997) work also stresses the importance of school as a site of identity formation and highlights how her participants perceive their 'streetwise' knowledge to be 'disregarded' and even 'ridiculed' within the official discourse community of school'.

Importantly, these works each address epistemological disjuncture. Smith (1990) acknowledges a 'disjunction between how women experience the world and the concepts and theoretical schemes by which society's self-consciousness is inscribed' (p.13). Gilligan (1993) expresses the same concern and suggests there is 'a limitation in the conception of human condition, an omission of certain truths about life' (p.p.1-2). While the women participants experience a disparity between the knowledge of value to them in their personal discourse communities and that which is privileged within official discourse communities , findings suggest that they find ways to challenge this disparity.

10.6   The importance of knowing and being known by people

Within participants' biographical neonarratives, importance is placed upon a particular type of local, embodied knowledge: knowing people and being known by people. This type of knowledge entails 'dialogue and interaction' (Belenky et al, 2007, p.18) and is closely linked with speaking and listening. Within the women participants' biographical neonarratives, there are repeated references to speaking and listening, highlighting the importance they place on 'dialogue and interaction' (Belenky et al, 2007, p.18).

The importance placed upon speaking and listening in participant biographical neonarratives is somewhat at odds with the objectified knowledge privileged within official discourse communities. Throughout the biographical neonarratives speaking and listening are used as metaphors for local, embodied knowledge. Within the ILP neonarratives, however, the focus is on dominant literacies associated with reading and writing. Importantly, within the biographical neonarratives, dominant literacies are often used as metaphors for objectified modes of knowing.

Analysis of the ILP neonarratives illustrates how, within the Skills for Life discourse community, the knowing adult learner is subordinated 'to objectified forms of knowledge of society or political economy' (Smith, 2005, p.10). The ILP is an example of how, within an official discourse community, 'what people experience directly in their everyday / everynight world [can be converted] into forms of knowledge in which people as subjects disappear and in which their perspectives on their own experiences are transposed and subdued by the magisterial forms of objectifying discourse' (Smith, 1990, p.4). The ILP neonarrative

privileges objectified forms of knowledge and provides few opportunities for learner voice, with those permitted relating only to skills and deficit.

10.7   Questioning the sharing of common goals

In contrast to the increasing textualisation of other official discourse communities, participants viewed their ILP paperwork in positive ways. As illustrated in Chapter 2, we live in a 'textually mediated world' (Smith, 1999) in which texts have become ubiquitous, and participants' interview data suggest that paperwork such as the ILP is expected of and accepted in an official discourse community. Findings from this study suggest, however, that an exploration of the practices in which texts are used can reveal a more complex picture, resulting in a deeper understanding of textual narrative representations.

The practices in which the ILPs are used by the two organisations in this study provide opportunities to challenge the deficit view represented by these texts and to assert the importance of local, embodied knowledge. Importantly, these opportunities are taken up by both the learners and their tutors. The two tutors in Provider 1, Eleanor and Sophie, reject the 'inexpert' positioning of the ILP by taking control and removing aspects of the ILP paperwork which they consider to be unnecessary. In Provider 2, both tutors and learners are involved in the ILP paperwork practices. Although accepting of the ILP paperwork itself, findings show that there are a variety of ways in which participants challenge the notions of deficit inherent within the Skills for Life discourse community by emphasising the importance of local, embodied knowledge.

As discussed in earlier chapters, a key characteristic of a discourse community is that 'members must share common goals' (Swales, 1990). Participants' comments about their ILP neonarratives suggest, however, that while tutors and learners participate in the community and complete the paperwork, they can also find ways to challenge some of the assumptions that inform the common goals. While the ILP neonarrative can be understood as a powerful text in ensuring that members share the discourse community's common goals (Swales, 1990), findings therefore suggest that participants do not necessarily share these goals. While participating in the Skills for Life discourse community, both literacy learners and their tutors find ways of challenging the privileging of certain epistemologies above others in this official discourse community.

10.8   Implications for Practice, Policy and Research

This research raises a number of important aspects regarding adult literacy practice, policy and research. Research Question 5 focuses on the meanings assigned to the literacy programme within each narrative representation. It is assumed within the Skills for Life discourse community, and consequently within the ILP neonarrative, that participants lack skills within their other discourse community memberships. Findings suggest, however, that participants in this study attribute other meanings to their membership of the Skills for Life discourse community. The meanings assigned to the literacy programme within each narrative representation are therefore quite different, a disparity which is the result of the different conceptualisations of literacy that inform each one.

The different conceptualisations of literacy that inform each narrative representation of focus in this research are also important in relation to the following research questions:

1. Within their Skills for Life narratives, what identities are constructed for the adult learners?

2. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do the adults construct for themselves?

These two research questions assume that learners are able to construct identities for themselves in the biographical narrative but that, within the ILP narrative, identities are constructed for them. As the following pages discuss, however, a focus on the practices involved in the completion of the ILP paperwork results in a new understanding of the ILP and suggests a limitation in the above research questions.

10.9   Towards a new understanding of the ILP

The research findings result in a different understanding of the ILP document to that outlined in earlier chapters of the thesis. As discussed in Chapter 2, texts have become familiar and accepted parts of contemporary life and, as a result of the emergence of a knowledge economy, accountability has now 'acquired a social presence of a new kind' (Strathern, 2000, p.1). Brandt (2009) explains that, in a knowledge economy, writing is 'hot property' as it puts 'knowledge in tangible, and thereby transactional, form' (p.117). Findings suggest, however, that increasing textualisation can also provide opportunities to challenge the types of knowledge which are privileged within official discourse communities suggesting that the

effects of increasing textualisation are not as straightforward or one-sided as was thought at the outset of this study.

A key argument of the social practices approach to literacy is that 'it simply does not make sense to view literacy separately from the communicative context in which it is used' (St. Clair, 2010, p.26). This approach informed the analysis of the ILP neonarratives in this study and revealed a more complex picture of the ILP than might be achieved through content analysis alone.

The identities constructed for participants within their ILP neonarratives reinforce the conceptualisations of the ILP discussed in Chapter 2: as a normalising technology (Osgood, 2009); as an object which co-opts teachers and learners into the Skills for Life Strategy (Burgess, 2008); and as 'a key technology of alignment between local and systematic practices and identities' (Hamilton, 2009, p.222). An exploration of the tutor and learner interview data regarding the practices surrounding the use of the ILPs, however, suggests an additional dimension to the ILP. The ILP is a powerful document in establishing the dominance of specific discourses, resulting in the discursive textual fabrication of people (Osgood, 2009, p.735). The ILP document can also be understood as shaping learners' identities 'though the categories into which their experience is translated' (Hamilton, 2009, p.51) and as constructing 'the identities of teachers and learners by specifying the abilities which comprise desirable identities' (Burgess, 2008, p.51). Findings suggest, however, that while ILPs 'play a crucial role in systems of performance management and accountability' (Burgess, 2008, p.51), they also provide opportunities for learners and tutors to challenge the epistemological disparity inherent within the Skills for Life official discourse community.

Further research is needed to explore further what happens when students and tutors engage in paperwork practices together within the classroom. This study's findings, however, support a move towards a new understanding of the effects of increasing textualisation. Barton's (2010) work suggests that new opportunities for vernacular writing, such as Flickr, give 'rise to new practices which embody different values from dominant literacies' (p.122). New technologies are therefore not only changing 'the core notion of vernacular' (Barton, 2010, p.122), but are also resulting in the production and sharing of new and vernacular knowledge. Importantly, this study's research findings suggest that increasing textualisation may be having a similar effect. The ILP, for example, appears to provide learners and tutors with opportunities to challenge the notions of deficit and the epistemological disparity inherent within the Skills for Life discourse community goals, asserting the importance of their local, embodied ways of knowing.

Appendix 1

PowerPoint Slides for Email Consultation

Research consultation

Caroline Storey

PhD Student
Department of Educational Research
Lancaster University

January 2009

Introduction: why consult?

- The purpose of the following slides is to consult with Skills for Life managers about a research project which will involve adult literacy students.
- The project will rely upon gaining access to adult literacy students.
- Gaining access to students will need to be approached carefully and both managers' and tutors' advice is therefore crucial to this process.
- Your feedback will inform the project's design.
- Please read through this brief presentation about the proposed research.
- When prompted, you to give your feedback; these prompts can be copied and pasted onto an email for you to then type your responses.

Background to the project (1)

- The introduction of the *Skills for Life Strategy* in 2001 saw many changes, including new CPD requirements for staff, new national tests for learners and a core curriculum for Adult Literacy
- However, increased funding has resulted in an increase in targets
- Policy increasingly promotes a prescriptive model of literacy with policy discourse dominated by the notion of deficit, adults lacking skills and links to economic prosperity

---

Background to the project (2)

- Recent research has shown aspects of adults' lives, other than employment, to be important. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

Barton et al (2007)
Literacy, Lives and Learning
Page 56

- Adults' life experiences and biographical transitions are often more important and significant to learners.
- This project has arisen as a result of tensions around official discourse about literacy policy linking adult literacy learners to skills and employment.

The project (1)

- **Participants** will be adults enrolled on a variety of literacy provision including a literacy workshop, a Move On Literacy course, and a Functional Skills Literacy pilot (3 organisations; 5 adults from each)

- **Research Methodology:**
  Interviews will be carried out over a 18 month period to construct adult biographical narratives. Paperwork data held by the provider relating to each adult (including initial interview, assessment and ILP data) will be analysed

---

The project (2)

The following diagram illustrates the project:

- This project acknowledges that additional discourses are produced, experienced at other than mainstream about linking life literacy on the learners' lives; therefore this focus will be on other discourses between lifelines.
- This project is and more important to remove as a means the qualitative narrative research in this area.

Participation

- A letter or email will be sent to Adult Literacy tutors in a specific geographical area inviting them to participate.
- Tutors wishing to participate would then discuss the project with their managers to gain the organisation's consent.
- Following an initial meeting, tutors would introduce the researcher to one of their learner groups and adults would be invited to participate.
- The tutors' organisations would provide space to anyone wishing to participate.

Considerations regarding participation in the research

- What benefit would this be for managers and tutors with consider participating in this project?
- What would encourage tutors and their organisations to participate?
- What would prevent tutors and their organisations from participating?
- [illegible]
- What will Adult Literacy learners feel are the benefit to them for participating in this study?

Feedback questions

Please take a few minutes to consider the following questions, along with any other questions you may have.

- [illegible]
- What questions would you have about the project?
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- Are there any issues that you foresee and can you offer any potential solutions to these?

Please email your comments to
p_vaney@yahoo.co.uk

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this consultation.

Your feedback will be invaluable in the planning of this project.

Appendix 2

Protocol for telephone survey with Skills for Life managers

Protocol for contacting Skills for Life managers (telephone survey)

Organisation: ....

Contact name: ....

Contact number: ....

Date contacted: ....

Issues covered and responses:

Funding

LSC funding guidelines identify two funding streams for Skills for Life provision, *Learner Responsive* and *Employer Responsive*.

Do you identify with this distinction?

Which one best fits your department?

Is it an accurate reflection of what's actually happening in your department?

Provision

What Skills for Life provision are you currently delivering?

Do you separate curriculum levels by class?

Research activities

Is your department currently engaged in any Skills for Life research activity?

Would you and other tutors in the department like to hear more about this project?

Appendix 3

Excerpt from Johnny's
biographical neonarrative (pilot study)

Excerpt from Johnny's biographical narrative (pilot study)

Johnny is in his late 50's, and is married with two children and three grandchildren. He has been in his current job for over thirty years and works Monday to Friday. Coming from a family of eight, with three sisters and four brothers, Johnny has 'always been a grafter' and has never been 'bone idle' because 'my nerves won't let me sit there for hours on end; I have to do something all the time'. Johnny left school around the age of fifteen and blames himself for his inability to read and write:

> It's degrading, it's terrible. Honestly, you don't know the half, you really don't. I feel so ashamed. I feel as though I've pinched some toffees out of your bag. I really feel ashamed of myself because I can't do it. And [the other two learners] used to blame the teachers. I don't, I blame *me* because in them days I used to like going the farm before school. So who's fault's that? Mine. The teacher didn't say, 'Don't you come school tomorrow, go to the farm', did she? *I* used to miss the school, *I* never paid attention.

At school, Johnny remembers he 'used to love throwing a javelin', but says 'I don't know whether I was any good or not'. As he grew older, going to the farm instead of school helped Johnny to avoid situations in which, for example, every child would have to read aloud a passage of text:

> ...you used to think to yourself, 'I'm having none of this. I won't be next, I'm out of here' ... I used to run from it, hide from it, try and escape from it, where I should have stood my ground.

That Johnny does not read and write remains unknown by most people in his life and Johnny himself does not use the words *reading* and *writing*, explaining instead that he 'can't do':

> [My grandchildren] don't know that I can't do. Even my daughter doesn't know I can't do. There's only [my wife] knows in the house that I can't do. Nobody else knows.

In recent years, Johnny's boss has also become aware of the situation:

> We used to have another boss and he was alright, don't get me wrong, but he was a firey beggar. And he used to throw things to you, not at you, to you. 'Here, get this filled in and get it filled in now'. 'Oh yeah, I'll get you that'. And then he started coming and saying 'Now!'. So me and [a colleague] went in the yard and we said 'Let's go and see him. If not, we'll bury him'. Because we were both mad ... And we just went in and came clean with him. He said, 'Why the hell didn't you tell me?'

> Did you feel relieved that you told him?

> Oh yeah, yeah. 'Thank god for that'. And he said, 'If you're ever stuck, come to me'. So [my colleague] said, 'Don't start throwing paper at us' and he said, 'No, no. You're a pair of idiots'. Because we'd gone through hell, you know, hiding it and walking away and all this carry on.

In the past, however, Johnny's employers have been unaware of the difficulties he experiences with reading and writing, and the increasing emphasis on literacy in employment has seen Johnny move on from several jobs over the years:

I used to love milking and be a stockman. And we used to read the cows, like 1 to whatever he's got, say 80. And once a month, night and morning, what we'd call a recording session. And I used to do all the paperwork, but it was all numbers. That's where I slipped up, see. I'd only record: cow number 4, 3 sugarfuls of corn, 4 gallons of milk. I had the word milk on me, so I knew what I was doing there. And that was smashing. And years after it came in that they did away with the numbers and they go to names. Here's my notice, I finish on Friday. I'll have to leave one job and go to another. That's how I've been.

As Johnny was growing up, he wanted to be a chef and got a job working in a kitchen:

After about two and a half years, I ended up going as a Commis Grill Chef, doing the steaks for the posh beggars, dressing all up, very smart. My hair was all – I used to love it. They used to call me Chef, they used to recognise you. Better than being called some of the names I've been called. 'Chef! A word'.

Seeing Johnny's potential, his boss offered him the opportunity to attend college one day each week and train to be a chef:

I thought, 'Marvellous, that'll do for me'. Then reality hit me. I thought, 'How can I go college? I can't even write my own –'.

So they didn't know?

Oh, they never knew. I just left that week. And the chef couldn't understand it. He said, 'Why are you leaving?' I said, 'Oh I'm fed up with this now. I want a change'. But I wasn't fed up and I didn't want a change.

And you wanted to do that when you were little.

Yeah. If they'd said no paperwork – I can learn things quicker with these (*signals hands*) and this (*signals mouth*), do you know what I'm saying? I don't need that (*signals paperwork*), but you *do* need that (*signals paperwork*) in this day and age, don't you?

Similarly, Johnny used to work in a nursery and, although he would have liked to, would 'never go and work in the greenhouse':

Right. Why not?

Because when you put the plants in, you had to write *Tulips*, and stick the thing. And yet I used to love to go in and watch it. But I couldn't go unsupervised because when it came to labels.

Did they not know?

No. For twenty odd years, they never knew. Then we used to start getting seed potatoes in bags, and every bag was labelled, but they were in two lots. And he'd say, 'Put the King Edwards in first' or whatever we got. So I used to get a bit of soil or something and smudge the name and say, 'Can you make this out? I can't see this properly, I can't make it out'. And he'd say, 'Cyprus', and I'd say, 'Are they the ones you said you wanted in first?' 'No, no, the other ones'. Sorted. And I took the label off that, put it in my pocket, and every time I went for a bag of potatoes ... that's how I've lived. You don't know the half.

Appendix 4

Consent form for life history interviews

Consent Form

Title of project: Life history and paperwork

Name of researcher: Sandra Varey

<div align="right">

**Please initial
each point below**

</div>

I confirm that I understand the aims of the research project.
I have had the opportunity to consider the information,   _____
ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I consent to this interview being recorded and transcribed   _____
for the purpose of analysis.

I understand that my details and any data relating to me will
be stored securely by the researcher. Extracts from transcripts
may be read by the university supervisor, but full transcripts   _____
will be read only by Sandra.

I consent to the researcher sharing reports of this project with
[the course provider]
                                                                                                _____

I consent to my tutor at [the course provider] providing
the researcher with copies of the paperwork held about me in   _____
relation to my Adult Literacy course.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am   _____
free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Quotes from my interviews and paperwork will be used in the
reporting of the project, including written reports and
presentations at conferences. However, I understand that my   _____
real name will not be used and that my identity will be protected.

My chosen pseudonym is: ....

I agree to take part in the above study.   _____

Name of participant: _____

Full address: _____

_____

_____

_____

Telephone number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Your details will be stored securely and your identity will be protected in the reporting of this research project.

Thank you

Appendix 5

Protocols for life history interviews

Interview 1 Protocol

Participant: _____   **Date:** _____

INTRODUCE PROJECT AND DISCUSS ANY QUERIES OR CONCERNS

- Student at Lancaster University; used to teach Adult Literacy

- Am interested in adults' life histories and their learning experiences

- This project aims to explore people's experiences and the paperwork held about them

COVER ETHICAL ASPECTS AND COMPLETE CONSENT FORM

- Discuss each stage of consent form and ask participant to initial

AGREE TIMETABLE FOR INTERVIEWS

- Provide participant copy of consent form

- Discuss timetable section and come to an agreement re this

USE CARDS TO GAIN SOME INITIAL BIOGRAPHICAL INFO AND EXPLORE SOME AREAS

- Allow participants a few minutes to look through cards and chose the ones they wish to answer, along with the order in which to answer

BEFORE CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Any other comments or issues?
- Be clear on arrangements for next interview meeting – and transcripts

---

Research Questions

1. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do adults construct for themselves?

2. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within these personal narratives?

NB: Record reflections on reverse

Interview 2 Protocol

Participant (pseudonym): _____ **Date:** _____

INTRO

- What has happened since we last met in [insert date]? What have you been up to?

- Discuss interview 1 transcript and get one signed and verified copy

MINDMAP ACTIVITY
NB: if not done, could give few minutes to do this

- You were asked to do a mind map activity with notes about your life

- How did you find it?

- Ask participant to talk through it

- Do any stories spring to mind about any of your points?

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Do you want to add any more notes to your mind map? Or any comments?

- Confirm when interview 3 and 4 will be.

- Will post this transcript as last time

- Next interview task will be to develop mind map into a piece of autobiographical piece of writing. Will post this with task letter couple of weeks before.

Research Questions

3. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do adults construct for themselves?

4. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within these personal narratives?

NB: Record reflections on reverse

Interview 3 Protocol

Participant: _____   **Date:** _____

INTRODUCTION

- Catch up – what has been happening since our last interview?

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING TASK

- Interviews 1 and 2 focused on your general life history – today we will focus a bit more on literacy and this course

- I will ask you to talk me through the piece of writing you were asked to do in preparation for today, how you felt about it etc

- READ THE TEXT

- Question prompts:
  What did they write about? Why?
  When did they do it?
  How did they feel when writing it? Planning it?
  What is the most important part of it and why?
  Elaborate on stories if necessary.

FOCUS A BIT ON THE LITERACY PROGRAMME

- Question prompts:
  How did you feel when I asked you to do this task?
  Did you enjoy it / not and why?
  How does this course tie in to your life history so far? Reasons for doing it etc
  ..

BEFORE CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Anything to add?
- Be clear on arrangements for transcript and **final interview** meeting.

Research Questions

5. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do adults construct for themselves?

6. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within these personal narratives?

NB: Record reflections on reverse

Interview 4 Protocol

Participant (pseudonym): _____ **Date:** _____

INTRO

- What has happened since we last met in _____? What have you been up to?

- Discuss interview 3 transcript and get one signed and verified copy

ACTIVITY: BRINGING PERSONAL ITEMS

- What items did you choose to bring along and why?

- Ask participant to talk through the item's significance / story

- Take photograph (with permission)

- NB: Important – discuss the ILP paperwork

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Do you want to add anything?

- Will post this transcript as last time – please <u>post back</u>

- Confirm arrangements for editing the narrative

Research Questions

7. Within their biographical narratives, what identities do adults construct for themselves?

8. What meanings are assigned to the literacy programme within these personal narratives?

NB: Record reflections on reverse

Appendix 6

Protocol for tutor interviews

Tutor interview protocol

Tutor: _____   **Date:** _____

Participants / Learners: _____

INTRO: Ethics (*5 minutes*)

Recording and transcribing the interview
A copy of the transcript will be sent
Please choose a pseudonym (explain this)

PART 1: Tutor background, role and department (*5 minutes*)
How long have you been a literacy tutor and how did you get involved in SfL?
Tell me a bit about your department and the provision it offers?
Any recent changes ...?
Tell me about your role in the department

PART 2: ILP paperwork (*10 minutes*) SKETCH TRAJECTORY FOR MYSELF –
JOURNEY AND PEOPLE INVOLVED
How is this designed and by whom?
Talk through practical things – how do you make these records? (how is the ILP used? Who is it completed by? When?)
Significance of it to the learners (do they see it? Is this important?)
What happens with it (during/after course)?
What do you record and why?
What are your thoughts about the ILPs in general?

PART 3: Overview of literacy course and learner group (*10 minutes*)
Can you tell me a bit about this literacy course in general?
How was it set up / recruited to?
Course design, length, curriculum level and qualification aim?
Can you tell me a bit about the learner group in general?

PART 4: Participants / learners in this study (*30 minutes*)
Discuss each learner one at a time:
- Tell me about X – what do you know about X? Please describe X.
Is it possible for you to record everything you would like to record? What can't you record?

See reverse for specific questions about each participant's ILPs (prepared in advance of interview)

Appendix 7

Invitation to take part in a research project

Invitation to take part in a research project

What is the project about?

This project is being carried out by Sandra Varey, a research student based at Lancaster University. Sandra is working with adults living in the northwest of England who, at the time of taking part in the project, are all enrolled on Adult Literacy courses. Sandra is interested in hearing about adults' life histories, memories and experiences.

How much time is involved in taking part?

If you decide to take part in the project, you would meet with Sandra on four occasions to talk about your life history. These four interviews would be spread over a few months with each interview lasting between 30 minutes and an hour, arranged for a day and time which suits you. People who have taken part in the study so far often find it useful to provide their mobile phone numbers so this can be arranged by text message a week or so before the interview.

What happens in the interviews?

Although they are called interviews, the meetings are more like an informal chat and are designed to be enjoyable – rather than you feeling that you're being quizzed. It is entirely up to you what you would like to talk about as it is your life history. To assist people in deciding what they would like to talk about, there is a very brief activity to do before each meeting.

What happens at the end of the project?

After each interview, you will receive a transcript of the meeting to check and alter if you wish. After the four interviews, Sandra then uses the interview data to construct your life history story, or biography. This will be produced in the form of a booklet and you will receive a copy of this at the end of the project. If you wish to stay in touch with Sandra after the project has ended, you will receive a copy of any article that is published about this project.

How is my identity protected in this project?

Each participant in this project selects a different name (pseudonym) to be called in this project, which ensures the protection of identity at all times. In addition, any identifying information in your interview data (such as the town you live in, employer name or other people's names) is removed.

If you would like to discuss this project further before deciding to take part, please let your tutor know and I will arrange to visit your class and answer any questions you have.

Many thanks, Sandra

Appendix 8

Questionnaire used in class visits

Questionnaire

About you:

Are you male or female? ....

How old are you? ....

What is your occupation? ....

Your literacy course:

What is your literacy tutor's name? ....

When did your Adult Literacy course start?
                     Month: ....   Year: ....

When is your literacy course expected to end?
                     Month: ....   Year: ....

Which curriculum level are you currently working towards? ....

If you are working towards a literacy qualification, please state which:
....

What were your reasons for doing this literacy course?
....
....
....
....

Your contact details

If you would like to be contacted to take part in this study, please provide your contact details below:

       Name: ....

       Telephone number: ....

       When is the best day / time to phone you?..............................

Appendix 9

Resources used to support class visits

My life

Home
- Friends
- Family members
- What do I enjoy doing in my spare time?

Learning
- What learning have I done in the past?
- Reasons for doing this literacy course
- My hopes for the future

Life history
- What have I done in my life up to now?
- Some key events in my life
- Important people in my life so far

Work
- What do I like about my job and why?
- Briefly describe my job
- How did I come to be doing this job?

341

My life

342

My Story by Susan Heaney

When I was a Care Assistant, I enjoyed that kind of work. I cared for my Grandmother from the age of nine; right up to the day she passed away. After she passed away I trained to be a care assistant and after it was finished I went to work in a residential home for the elderly. My job was to help the residents with their daily routine such as getting them up in the morning and help them get dressed. I would take them down to breakfast, give them breakfast, make their beds, give them baths, and at night time, help them to bed. I did have a laugh with other care assistants about one elderly lady lost her false teeth and we had to find them, we found them in another elderly lady's mouth.

My School Life and Working Life
(Anonymous)

I was born in Nigeria in the year 1952. The name of my father is Paul Olayode and the name of my mother is Dupe Asu. I started primary school in Nigeria in the year 1958 and finished in the year 1964.

After I finished primary school I did not go to higher school because my father did not have money to send me to higher school.

I went to learn how to be a motor mechanic for 5 years.

As a motor mechanic you have to know the name of all the tools that you will use and you have to know the sizes of each one.

It is a very nice job and it helps you to know important people and it make you proud when some of your friends see you driving.

After 5 years I left my boss workshop to work with Nigerian Tobacco Company for 14 years. Then I resigned from my job and travelled to London.

When I arrived in London I lived with my brother and he told some of his friends to look for a job for me and a week later I started working in a hotel in the west end as a porter in the hotel.

As a porter you will be asked to wash cooking pots and clear the floor.

After 3 years I left the job and I went to do my driving test and got my drivers licence and I do driving for a living.

More stories from adult learners are available at:

http://www.nrdc.org.uk/voicesonthepage.asp

Appendix 10

Example of Atlas ti output for

one participant when

constructing biographical neonarratives

Appendix 10: Example of Atlas ti output for Suzanne

```
CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE (CELL=Q-FREQ)
Report created by Super - 06/11/2012 21:35:41
"HU:  [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific
Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]"

Code-Filter: All [11]
PD-Filter: All [8]
Quotation-Filter: All [108]
```

| | PRIMARY DOCS | | | | | | | | |
CODES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Totals
Bear	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Courses and college	6	5	11	4	0	0	0	0	26
Cross	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Employment history	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Ex	2	6	2	3	0	0	0	0	13
Family	4	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	16
Future plans	1	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	9
Personal	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	7
School and growing u	3	13	5	0	0	0	0	0	21
Socialising and Inte	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Son	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
Totals	23	43	23	19	0	0	0	0	108

1 quotation(s) for code: BEAR
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

HU: Suzanne
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]
Edited by:Super
Date/Time: 06/11/2012 21:40:45

_____

4:12 I'll do the bear because it's .. (318:372)

26 quotation(s) for code: COURSES AND COLLEGE
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

HU: Suzanne
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]
Edited by:Super
Date/Time: 06/11/2012 21:41:17

_____

1:3 He'll be in bed so I'll probab.. (33:45)
1:4 So how did you get to start th.. (51:65)
1:5 Yeah, I quite like the small c.. (69:73)

1:10 You've got this course startin.. (119:121)
1:11 What did you want to be when y.. (131:149)
1:19 And what was the highlight of .. (267:299)
2:5 What did you do at college? I .. (82:88)
2:22 So when you went to college th.. (307:313)
2:25 If that hadn't happened, do yo.. (351:357)
2:31 So what's in the future then, .. (463:465)
2:33 What night's the maths on then.. (479:493)
3:2 Yeah I just sort of wrote abou.. (40:40)
3:3 I think I've gone more into de.. (44:44)
3:4 Did you spend quite a while on.. (62:84)
3:6 With writing, when was the las.. (98:108)
3:7 So did you use your mindmap to.. (110:120)
3:18 What did you think when you fi.. (400:410)
3:19 Where did you sit and write it.. (384:398)
3:20 So what other stuff do you wri.. (412:434)
3:21 So this course, you're not doi.. (436:450)
3:22 So when you come here now ever.. (452:468)
3:23 What's interesting in your wri.. (472:478)
4:5 I mean there were never really.. (150:158)
4:7 And what do you think about yo.. (184:194)
4:14 Yeah, I left in Year 10 and we.. (432:434)
4:19 So now you don't have it on a .. (538:540)

1 quotation(s) for code: CROSS
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

HU: Suzanne
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]
Edited by:Super
Date/Time: 06/11/2012 21:43:05

_____

4:11 I'll start with the cross if y.. (254:306)

3 quotation(s) for code: EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

HU: Suzanne
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]
Edited by:Super
Date/Time: 06/11/2012 21:44:15

_____

1:7 what was your first job? I jus.. (91:97)
2:24 But I got bullied at work so I.. (325:349)
4:16 Employment history and overvie.. (446:460)

13 quotation(s) for code: EX
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

HU: Suzanne
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]
Edited by:Super

_____

1:2 I'm stopping at my parents. (25:25)
1:14 And does he have any contact w.. (175:177)
2:7 I had my son about three month.. (92:92)
2:23 So where does your son's dad f.. (315:325)
2:26 So do you get on with [your ex.. (359:397)
2:27 So have you had any agro from .. (411:413)
2:28 Does he see [your son]. Yeah h.. (419:433)
2:30 It must be nice to have your f.. (451:461)
3:10 So you tend to stay friends wi.. (178:196)
3:17 've just got new pink tree. So.. (350:374)
4:4 And how are things with your e.. (68:96)
4:10 I remember when I first met yo.. (216:238)
4:17 In the past 12 months, I'm jus.. (482:492)

16 quotation(s) for code: FAMILY
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

_____

1:13 Seventeen and I had him at sev.. (165:169)
1:20 Right, OK: my ideal night out .. (309:333)
1:21 I've got an older brother. He'.. (339:347)
1:22 So is it your mum and dad that.. (349:355)
2:1 What about your sister? Becaus.. (26:32)
2:3 And is this your new boyfriend.. (58:68)
2:8 So, if you had to pick one to .. (102:112)
2:9 How old were you when your mum.. (114:120)
2:38 Why do you think she had such .. (551:561)
2:39 So you told me last time you'r.. (563:573)
2:40 What about your brother then? .. (579:593)
2:41 When did they find out about t.. (595:617)
2:42 Did he do well at school? Yeah.. (619:629)
2:43 Do did your dad cause your mum.. (631:645)
3:9 We all took holidays together .. (152:160)
4:3 So what happened at Christmas .. (52:58)

9 quotation(s) for code: FUTURE PLANS
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

_____

1:8 I have to go to the Jobcentre .. (105:113)
2:29 What happened with that health.. (439:449)
2:32 Any idea, what do you think yo.. (467:473)
2:34 It's gonna take me a while to .. (497:509)
4:1 I've been for an interview at .. (6:26)

4:6 When does he start school? Sep.. (172:178)
4:8 I mean I might do my Maths, bu.. (198:202)
4:9 I went to an open evening and .. (206:214)
4:15 Are you avoiding numeracy for .. (438:444)

7 quotation(s) for code: PERSONAL
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

_____

1:18 Right, if you had to describe .. (251:265)
2:2 I could have gone on for ages .. (52:56)
2:6 I just put things that were im.. (100:100)
3:1 Yeah all moved in. But nothing.. (22:26)
3:16 I got everything decorated in .. (314:338)
4:2 But that's it, nothing else is.. (34:38)
4:18 I'm so much stronger now. I fe.. (544:544)

21 quotation(s) for code: SCHOOL AND GROWING UP
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

_____

1:6 What was school like? How come.. (75:89)
1:9 So why do you think you didn't.. (115:117)
1:23 Did you have a busy teenage li.. (365:371)
2:4 So you put 'Leaving School' fi.. (70:76)
2:12 So you've put 'Self harming' o.. (154:173)
2:13 Before that, primary school, w.. (175:181)
2:14 What was your primary school l.. (183:193)
2:15 How many forms were in your se.. (195:209)
2:16 Did it take a while for it to .. (211:221)
2:17 So this girl, when was the las.. (231:237)
2:18 What was like then? I think sh.. (247:249)
2:19 So really then, when you think.. (251:265)
2:20 So did you have friends in the.. (267:293)
2:21 Right so did you go to parents.. (295:305)
2:36 You know you said there were S.. (523:537)
2:37 Your brother went to uni, didn.. (539:549)
3:8 It's just like on the way to a.. (140:144)
3:11 So, when you say there 'I hit .. (198:216)
3:12 My friends knew him, they went.. (226:250)
3:13 She weren't mad, she were upse.. (270:270)
3:14 Do you think it's changed in t.. (272:274)

5 quotation(s) for code: SOCIALISING AND INTERESTS

Quotation-Filter: All

_____

HU: Suzanne
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]
Edited by:Super
Date/Time: 06/11/2012 21:46:37

_____

1:16 How do you relax? I go to the .. (207:233)
1:17 What is it you like about book.. (235:241)
2:10 Where do you go out in Barlick.. (138:140)
2:11 That's why I like it, because .. (144:144)
3:5 I don't know if you do it much.. (90:96)

6 quotation(s) for code: SON
Quotation-Filter: All

_____

HU: Suzanne
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\vareys\My Documents\Scientific Software\ATLASti\Suzanne.hpr6]
Edited by:Super
Date/Time: 06/11/2012 21:46:59

_____

1:1 Tell me about your little boy... (11:21)
1:12 The most surprising thing that.. (159:165)
1:15 I got into it as soon as he wa.. (189:205)
2:35 feel scared for him that he's .. (513:521)
3:15 'Cause I think if I had've don.. (302:306)
4:13 So what's the story behind tha.. (390:416)

Appendix 11

Notes made in Atlas ti about participants –

two examples

<p align="center">**Notes made in Atlas ti about participants – two examples**</p>

Example 1: Isla

I first met Isla when I visited her course held in a local authority training building. There were four or five learners present and three 'signed up'.

Before attending the group to 'recruit', I had provided the tutor with an info sheet about the project. The tutor had invited me along because this had prompted some interest, although they understood that there was no commitment to take part.

I planned a mindmap / paired discussion which then led to a group discussion and then onto some personal writing.

The first three interviews took place in the same location as the literacy course. However this was closed over summer and Isla had moved house, so interview 4 took place in her new home.

1. How did Isla approach the 4 tasks and use the opportunities across the interviews?

Interview 1 with cards -

The first question Isla selects to answer is 'What is your favourite smell?' her answer to which is 'newborn babies'. This opens up a discussion about her four children and how they aren't talking to her due to her divorce. Also she explains that colleagues having babies want what she once had, whereas she now wants what they had - a single life - and she never thought she'd be in this situation.

The second question is 'If you were flooded, what would you save?' - answer: the children's scrapbooks.

Third question: 'What's your favourite thing about Christmas?' - links to family and the tradition of decorating the tree with music on etc. Won't happen this year.

Fourth question: 'What were you doing at 23?' - discusses where she's lived in the Army.

Last question: 'What is your ideal night out?'

Interview 2 with mindmap -

Isla's mindmap just had four main points on it and she elaborated on things she touched on in interview 1: her divorce and changes in her life; the situation with her children; her dogs.

Interview 3 with writing -

Isla chose to write about passing her driving test because, as she put it, there are good things happening all the time but they get crowded out by her current situation - so she wanted to write about something happy.

Interview 4 with personal items -

Items Isla brought along were CDs , mother's day cards, a teddy bear her daughter bought her, and a miniature village given to her in Germany.

Asked why she brought these items, Isla said they remind her of happier times, and times when she felt settled.

Only when going through my checklist, and when I prompted Isla, did she mention her own childhood and upbringing. She barely remembers anything as her homelife was not happy and she got bullied at school. She met her husband at 15 and got married young to escape.

2. What did I do when restructuring Isla's data into her neonarrative?

Unlike all the other narratives, I used several different codes for Isla. This was to split up her 'Family and Friends' category to make it easier to piece together and my decisiion to do this was due to the complexity of her data, as she was going through a bad divorce whilst taking part in the study and much of what she talked about focused on this.

The codes I used in Atlas were therefore:

Personal
Army wife
Husband / Divorce
Sons
Daughter
Other family
Friends
School and Growing Up
Employment
Courses and College
Future Plans

I read through all interview transcripts and categorised all key quotes and information as above.

Throughout the construction of the narrative, I tried to think about what content and structure Isla herself would be happy with and, I would say, the audience I was 'writing / editing' for was Isla herself.

IMP: because of what Isla was going through at the time of this study, much of her focus was on the present (or very recent past). Had to consider this when putting together the neonarrative.

Example 2: Sandy

I first met Sandy when I visited her course (held at Rivacre). There were four learners present and three 'signed up'.
Before attending the group to 'recruit', I had provided the tutor with an info sheet about the project. The tutor had invited me along because this had prompted some interest, although they understood that there was no commitment to take part.
I planned a mindmap / paired discussion which then led to a group discussion and then onto some personal writing. It was this mindmap which Sandy brought along to interview 2, based on a proforma I provided (which is why I produced an electronic copy, so anonymise it). This was also the writing that Sandy brought.

All interviews took place in Rivacre, the same location as the literacy class and only a few minutes' walk from Sandy's house.

1. How did Sandy approach the 4 tasks and use the opportunities across the interviews?

Interview 1 with cards -
The cards Sandy chose enabled her to focus on her husband and children, the most important aspect of her life. Sandy also briefly mentions work and her mum, dad and brother. So her choice of cards are broad.

Interview 2 with mindmap -
As mentioned above, Sandy brings the mind-map she did in class along to interview 2.
By interview 2, Sandy has sat and passed the Level 2 test.

Interview 3 with writing -
Sandy brought the writing with her that she did in the class I visited.

Interview 4 with personal items -
Most of Sandy's items relate to her children, except for her swimming awards which relate to Sandy's own childhood.

2. What did I do when restructuring Sandy's data into her neonarrative?

After uploading all data to Atlas and creating a document family for Sandy, I created six codes:
Personal
Friends and Family
School and Growing Up
Employment
Courses and College
Future Plans

I read through all interview transcripts and categorised all key quotes and information as above.

Throughout the construction of the narrative, I tried to think about what content and structure Sandy herself would be happy with and, I would say, the audience I was 'writing / editing' for was Sandy herself.

Appendix 12

Excerpts from two participant

biographical neonarratives

Emily brought the following photograph along to the final interview:

I've brought this - now there's no people in it and it's just to give you an idea of where my daughter is and what is involved that I help out with. This is on the edge of [a local] forest and this is where they're situated. All around there is a seven mile ride.

Is that hard work for them, running that?

It is. They have two full-time people. They've got [someone] full-time in the office with [my daughter]. She's doing three days. It's all the bureaucracy, isn't it? He's just bought a gallop - £250,000 it's cost him to put it in. Four furlongs which is half a mile, isn't it? They've got to work hard. They sell haylage to horsey people. They've got to do anything they can. They're having a big horse event this weekend.

This is my daughter's horse, the one that kicked her when she had her broken leg. And that's a foal she's had and he was born the day I left work, 30th April. And she's won at a show with him. He was born the same day I retired. He's a little cute. Anyway she's got him home now, he's at her house now, and the horse is in foal again.

Emily also has a son who died in a road accident when he was 20. Emily explains 'it's my son's birthday Christmas week' and he would now be 33:

Oh, he was lovely. Very easy going, very popular really, I think he was. Because on the day of his funeral, I didn't know half the people there. The church was absolutely full, and it's a *big* church, and it was full. It was standing room only. And that was something for a twenty year old. I'd never have that many people at my funeral, but he did. He did things for people that you didn't know about, he didn't tell you. He was very quiet, very unassuming, very close to me. Yeah, I miss that really. But you have to get on, make the best of what you've got. It's sad really. But you don't have to think too much or too deep into it, because it even gets you now.

Here is the item that Michal brought along to interview 4:
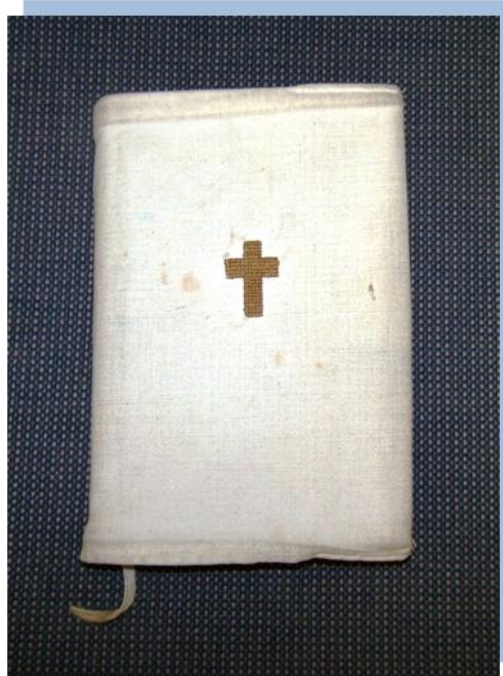
Michal explains why this bible is important to him:

> I've had it fifteen, sixteen years maybe and I didn't use it. My brother had it and eventually he got his own bible so it was just in the drawer. My brother sent me the bible and a few more books, here to England, when I had a really bad time when I broke up with my girlfriend and stuff. So he sent me that here. I didn't read it anyway, but it was here. I didn't ask him to send it. When you were in church and you were about 14 or 15, you had like a big ceremony, taking you to the partner of the church. So they gave me that bible on my confirmation as a present from our church.
>
> So when you got it, you just put it away?
>
> Yeah! (*laughs*)
>
> And what will you do with it?
>
> I don't know, just keep it. It's like all your life process, just studying it. I read the New Testament once and I'm now reading it a second time. I

discovered more and other things that I didn't realise before. And now, people in church here, they are Christians some of them for forty years and they are still finding something out, something different, you know? It's a whole life process. You're never good enough. You have to always keep pushing yourself to go forward.

In the final interview, Michal explains:

Last week I was baptised. Actually I was baptised before but it's like little children and I didn't bother before. I had no idea what was going on. And now I think it should be like that, when you *believe* it - after that, you should be baptised.

Family and Friends

When asked, 'What is your favourite view?', Michal explains his family has a holiday home which they visit 'when it's somebody's birthday or when it's a big party':

My family back home we've got like a cottage, summerhouse. It's really beautiful, nature, countryside in there. I like it very much. There is electric and everything in there. Now my dad's tried to build a sauna as well in there. It's going to be a bit posh as well! It's really nice and quiet. A few cottages around, but it's beautiful there. And for now it's snow there, and it's near ski lifts. It's quite popular area.

Michal is from 'quite a small village' where his father was mayor for twelve years. He explains that his dad is 'quite an important man in the area' and 'There's only eight hundred people in the village so everybody knows us and everybody knows each other.

Appendix 13

List of all questions in question card box

Appendix 13: List of all questions in question card box used in Interview 1

What is your favourite swear word?

Would you prefer to understand electricity or be a good public speaker?

Is it better to travel or arrive?

Where is your favourite place in the British Isles?

What is your greatest travel luxury?

If you had to be stranded in any one place in the world, where would it be?

Who is your favourite Dr Who assistant?

What is your most unappealing habit?

When were you happiest?

If you were flooded, what would you save, apart from your family and friends?

What is your favourite smell?

What did you want to be when you grew up?

My ideal night out is ...

If your wardrobe were on fire, which three things would you save?

What ending of a film, book or play most disappointed you?

Would you rather be a senior manager of a multi-national company or run a small company?

What was the worst film you saw recently?

What is your fantasy job?

What is the book you have most often bought for others?

What would in your Desert Island Disc luxury?

Are you a beach bum, a culture vulture, or an adrenaline junkie?

At heart I'm just a frustrated ...

If invited to a superhero fancy dress party, who would you go as?

What is your favourite children's book?

Do you prefer playing team games or being in a team of one?

What do you wish had never been invented?

What was your first student or holiday job?

What, for you, is the most romantic moment in fiction?

Which world record would you most like to hold?

What is your greatest extravagance?

What is your main source of current affairs or news?

What do you never travel without?

Describe yourself in three words.

What (not a person) couldn't you live without?

What is your favourite website or BLOG?

Do you offset your carbon footprint?

What is your first holiday memory?

Which two would you choose to have: a cook, cleaner, butler or gardener?

What would you like people to remember about you?

What is your favourite building?

Which current film actor or actress do you fancy?

What was the last eco-friendly thing you did?

What phrase do you use far too often?

Who do you think is today's most overrated celebrity?

Are you a saver or a spender?

What were you doing at 23?

What is your favourite view?

How do you relax?

Would you intervene when someone is being a bad citizen e.g. putting their feet on the seat of a train?

What was the highlight of your last 12 months?

It's not fashionable but I like ...

What wakes you up in a sweat in the middle of the night?

What do you wish you had known 10 years ago?

Would you prefer to have a high IQ or a high EQ (emotional intelligence quota)?

What is your favourite thing about Christmas?

In a nutshell my philosophy is ...

Where have you been that you never want to return?

What job or career (other than my current one) do you think I would be good at?

Who (not necessarily still alive) would you most like to sit next to on a long-haul flight?

The most surprising thing that happened to me was ...

Appendix 14

List of questions selected by each participant in

order selected

Appendix 14: List of questions selected by each participant in Interview 1 in the order selected

Participant name	Question cards selected (in the order in which they were discussed)
Suzanne *NB: I selected the questions*	What did you want to be when you grew up? The most surprising thing that happened to me was ... Describe yourself in three words What was the highlight of your last 12 months? My ideal night out is ... What do you wish you had known ten years ago?
Anne	What is your favourite thing about Christmas? *Only discussed one question card (her first son)*
Jalisa	Who do you think is today's most over-rated celebrity? What is your favourite thing about Christmas? What phrase do you use far too often? Are you a saver or a spender?
Lexi *NB: Lexi just split the pack and answered whatever came out*	What is your favourite thing about Christmas? What's your fantasy job? Would you prefer to have a high IQ or a high emotional intelligence?
Michal	What is your favourite view? What ending of a film, book or play most disappointed you? What is your favourite thing about Christmas? Are you a saver or a spender? What is your favourite website or blog?
Beth	Who, not necessarily still alive, would you most like to sit next to on a long-haul flight? *Only discussed one question card (her mum and family)*
Louise	What was your first student or holiday job? What do you wish you had known ten years ago?

	What did you want to be when you grew up? What would you like people to remember about you?
Isla	What is your favourite smell? If you were flooded, what would you save, apart from your family and friends? What is your favourite thing about Christmas? My ideal night out is ...
Sandy	When were you happiest? What is your favourite children's book? What is your favourite thing about Christmas? If you were flooded, what would you save, apart from your family and friends? Do you prefer playing team games or being in a team of one? Who, not necessarily still alive, would you most like to sit next to on a long-haul flight?
Alice	Which two would you choose to have: a cook, cleaner, butler or gardener? What were you doing at 23? What is your favourite view? What job or career (other than my current one) do you think I would be good at?
Emily	It's not fashionable but I like ... What was the highlight of your last 12 months? What is your favourite thing about Christmas? Would you intervene when someone is being a bad citizen e.g. putting their feet on the seat of a train? Who (not necessarily still alive) would you most like to sit next to on a long-haul flight?
Molly	What job or career (other than my current one) do you think I would be good at? What is your favourite website or BLOG? What (not a person) couldn't you live without? Do you offset your carbon footprint? What is your first holiday memory?

Appendix 15

Overview of the content of each participant's ILP

neonarrative

Appendix 15: Overview of the content of each participant's ILP neonarrative

Provider 1: Eleanor and Sophie's ILP paperwork

The ILPs used in Provider 1 contain few documents and are used by the tutors for tracking learner progress, rather than being used in the classroom with learners themselves. Eleanor and Sophie are adult literacy tutors based in a Lifelong Learning department within an FE college in the northwest of England. Four project participants were recruited from the same Provider 1 classroom, a class taught by Eleanor: Anne, Jalisa, Lexi and Michal. The table below provides an overview of the content and use of this particular ILP:

Form name	Description of content and use
Literacy and Numeracy Initial Assessment Information Sheet	Completed at initial interview / drop-in session Contains: personal details, contact information, course details
Record of Individual Learning	Used by the tutor to map each learner's progress throughout the course Contains: initial and diagnostic assessment results, group and individual learning outcomes, individual support needs
Literacy Diagnostic Record Sheet	Used by the tutor to map each learner's progress throughout the course Contains: each element of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum along with curriculum reference (to be ticked when achieved)

Table A16.1: Overview of the content of Anne, Jalisa, Lexi and Michal's ILP

One project participant, Suzanne, was recruited from tutor Sophie's classroom. The table below illustrates the content and use of this ILP:

Form name	Description of content and use
Initial Assessment	ALBSSU paper-based initial assessment version 1
Free Writing	Written by the learner in the first lesson Beginning with 'In one year's time ...' Used by the tutor as a diagnostic tool
Literacy Diagnostic Record Sheet	Used by the tutor to map each learner's progress throughout the course Contains: each element of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum along with curriculum reference (to be ticked when achieved)

Table A16.2: Overview of the content of Suzanne's ILP

Provider 2: Christine and Penny's ILP paperwork

The ILPs used in Provider 2 contain many different documents and are used in each lesson by both the tutors and the learners. Christine and Penny are adult literacy tutors based in a Lifelong Learning department within a local authority in the northwest of England. Although once part of the same team, some time before this study took place Christine and Penny were each relocated to different departments to teach literacy in different areas of the county. As a result, their ILP paperwork is similar but they are no longer colleagues.

One project participant recruited to the study from Penny's classroom, Beth, was attending a one-to-one session with Penny to work towards an Entry Level 3 qualification. The following table illustrates the content and use of this ILP:

Form name	Description of content and use
Learner record form	Completed by learner and tutor in first lesson Contains: personal details, contact information, course details, disability status, ethnic origin, employer details, qualifications held
Train to Gain: Self-Declaration of Eligibility	Completed by learner and tutor in first lesson Contains: declaration of eligibility sections for completion by learner, employer and course provider
Summary of Training Needs Analysis, Initial Assessment and Learning Plan	Completed by tutor and learner early in the course Contains: prior learning, qualifications, work experience and other skills; group goals and personal learning objectives; initial assessment results, preferred learning style and additional support requirements
Qualification Learning Objectives	Completed by tutor and learner early in the course Contains: Individual learning objectives; Key support and development needs Estimated time required for achievement of qualification
Learning Styles Questionnaire	Completed by the learner early in the course The results from this are recorded on the 'Summary of Training Needs Analysis, Initial Assessment and Learning Plan' form
Learning and review log	Completed by the learner each lesson Contains: record of each lesson's activities, learning and reflections, with a section to record practice test results

Table A16.3: Overview of the content of Beth's ILP

Three further participants – Louise, Isla and Sandy – were recruited from another of Penny's classrooms, a level 2 short literacy course. The ILP used in this course is similar to that outlined above in Table A16.3. While not including the first two forms – the Learner Record form and Train to Gain eligibility form – the ILP contains:

Form name	Description of content and use
Diagnostic resources (two documents)	Completed by the learner in lessons 1 and 2

Contains: Move On practice test (completed online with printed results); punctuation diagnostic test (marked out of 50) |
| English Skills Checklist | Completed by learner and tutor in lesson 1

Used as an activity to establish both group and individual goals, and recorded in 'Summary of Training Needs Analysis' form |
| Learner Satisfaction Survey | Completed by the learner at the end of the course

Contains: the learner's evaluation of different aspects of the course including venue, teaching methods, content and organisation |

Table A16.4: Overview of the content of Louise, Isla and Sandy's ILP

Three further project participants were recruited from the same Provider 2 classroom, a class taught by Christine. The ILP used in this course is the same as that outlined above in Table 3, while also containing:

Form name	Description of content and use
Mid-course review	Completed by the learner and tutor during the course

Contains: tutor feedback on learner progress, learner feedback / suggestions, and revised objectives / test date |
| Information, Advice and Guidance * | Completed at the end of the course to record the learner's:
- future employment and learning plans, along with information required by the learner and provided by the tutor.
- evaluation of different aspects of the course including venue, teaching methods, content and organisation |

Table A16.5: Overview of the content of Alice, Emily and Molly's ILP

Appendix 16

'Summary of Training Needs Analysis,

Initial Assessment and Learning Plan'

(used in Provider 2's ILP)

Summary of Training Needs Analysis, Initial Assessment and Learning Plan

Learner Name.................................Phone .... DOB.................

Course venue ....Employer....................... Tutor ....

Start Date .... Course and level ....

Learner's prior knowledge/Learning
Highest Qualifications:
Access to Nursing ~~Course~~ Certificate
NVQ 1+2 in Catering
Work experience:
Catering Supervisor
(Note any other skills you have including IT)

Highest qualification in English	D	Maths E	

Personal Learning Objectives (what do you hope to achieve by doing this course? qualification?)	
	End Review
1 To gain a better English Qualification.	✓
2 To help my children more with their homework	✓
3 To keep my brain active	✓

INITIAL SKILL CHECK

Initial Assessment method used ✓ Mini Test; Discussion; Practice Test Free Writing; Read, write plus; Other	Level assessed at: 2	1st Practice test: Score: /	2nd Practice Test Score: /
Preferred Learning style ✓ (based on questionnaire)	visual	auditory	kinaesthetic
			✓

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

To ensure we can provide appropriate support please answer the following questions:	
Do you have any hearing / sight difficulties?	~~Yes~~/No
Do you have any other support needs eg dyslexia, mobility, ill health etc	~~Yes~~/No
Other information:	

Appendix 17

Paper-based diagnostic test:

unpunctuated text exercise

(used in Provider 2's ILP)

Diagnostic Test

Put capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, commas and apostrophes in the following text where needed.

it was my uncle jacks idea to take us all to blackpool on that sunday in june, It was a complete disaster the weather had started dry, warm and sunny. later, iust before lunch, it turned to heavy rain and it wasnt long before we were caught up in the most frightening thunder, lightning and hailstones.

what do you think he did, he didnt change plans and have a meal inside, he insisted we should continue our picnic lunch outside, he spread out the cloth and set out the sandwiches, crisps, sausages, cakes and a large flask of coffee. he didnt seem to notice the rain and wondered why, when he suggested a game of cricket, we all looked so horrified.

i couldnt believe it, we got colder, wetter and more miserable by the minute. the journey home made things worse. the car was old and all the tyres tread-depths were getting low. the police waved us down for a roadside check, and we knew this was the last straw!

capitals for proper nouns
con——ous

29/50

29 = 58%

Appendix 18

'Literacy Diagnostic Record' Sheet

(used in Provider 1's ILP)

Teacher's Literacy Diagnostic Record Sheet L1

Group:

Task Description	Curriculum Reference	Student Initials- Tick when established												
Trace and understand the main events of a text	Rt/L1.1													
Match text to purpose/context	Rt/L1.2													
Identify the main points and infer meanings from images	Rt/L1.3													
Use organisational and structural features to locate information	Rt/L1.4													
Skimming/scanning/reading for detail	Rt/L1.5													
Use grammatical knowledge and punctuation to predict meaning	Rs/L1.1.2													
Vocabulary building	Rw/L1.1.2.3													
Use a dictionary/thesaurus														
Plan and draft writing	Wt/L1.1.2.3													
Format/language/audience/purpose	Wt/L1.4.5													
Proof-read for accuracy	Wt/L1.6													
Free Writing sentences grammar punctuation spelling neatness and legibility	Ws/L1.1 Ws/L1.2 Ws/L1.3 Ww/L1.1 Ww/L1.2													
Listen and respond	SLlr/L1													
Speak to communicate	SLc/L1													
Engage in discussion	SLd/L1													

Appendix 19

'Record of Individual Learning' Sheet

(used in Provider 1's ILP)

Record of Individual Learning – Skills for Life

This sheet records your progress during your course.

Section 1: Initial and Diagnostic Assessment								
Initial Assessment Level:								
Diagnostic Assessment Profile:	Speaking	L2	Listening	L2	Reading	L2	Writing	L1
Long Term Goals:	Access FE. course at college.							

Section 2: Learning Outcomes

In the box below are the learning outcomes for your course.
- At the beginning of the course please indicate your starting level (Scale A-D below)
- At the end of the course show how far you feel you have progressed using the same scale

A = I can do this well   B = I can just do this   C = I can nearly do this   D = I cannot do this

Group Learning Outcomes	Start	Mid	End	Date Achieved
Use different reading strategies to find and obtain information	B	B	A	Jan '10
Write using suitable format and structure for different purposes	B	B	A	Dec. '09
Speaking and Listening	(A)	(A)	(A)	

Individual Learning Outcomes Take an Entry Level / L1 / L2 National Test in Literacy	Notes (include curr. Ref. where appropriate) L1 + L2. achieved Jan. '10.

Individual Support Needs
(Please specify if you need any extra help, e.g., with access to the venue, specialist equipment, language support, etc.)

Tutor signature: ▮▮▮   Learner signature:

Appendix 20

'Detailed Review Log'

(used in Provider 2's ILP)

DETAILED REVIEW LOG

Date	What have I learned?	Learner and tutor comments: How did I learn it? What went well and why? What went less well and why?	Plans and next steps What can I do outside the classroom? What needs more work?
20.1.10	Skills check list Free writing Initial assessment	To make sure you read the text to answer a question. Really enjoyed as was very nervous to start everyone including tutor very nice and easy to talk to.	Practise reading text. Welcome to the course!
27.1.10	Spelling Strategies	Really enjoyed the test) add) different ways to help children spell. Very relaxed session I can see myself. Enjoyed activities set - handy	Practise spelling. Proof reading Confidence growing
spelling recap punctuation 3.2.10 Sentence definition	Rules of Sentences and Grammer.	on Punctuation 70/0 by more comma's etc. to comma's etc.	Homework Still wise Spellings - programme
10.2.10	Sentences Commas Apostrophes	Struggled at first with diff- erent sentences and adding commas. By the end understood and was pleased with my progress	Set study pack. skill wise practise spelling ways
24.2.10	Apostrophe of possession. Paragraphs. Intro to Grammer	I struggled to understand the apostrophe of possession. I think I understand more now hopefully, difficult to grasp well can work is apostophies a lot	You add particularly ways or apostrophes poss of possess: Read Through self study pack and practise back from bed s

References

Action Aid (2012) 'Reflect'. Available at: http://www.actionaid.org.uk/323/reflect.html

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (2001) 'Skills for Life – The Strategy'. Sudbury:

Department for Education and Skills.

Alexander, D., Muir, D. and Chant, D. (1992) 'Interrogating Stories: How teachers think they

learned to teach'. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol.8, No.1, 1992, pp. 59-68.

Astley, M. (2010) 'Sector responds to Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy announcement'.

Available at: http://www.fenews.co.uk/fe-news/sector-responds-to-skills-for-sustainable-

growth-strategy-announcement [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Atkinson, R. (1998) *The Life Story Interview: Qualitative Research Methods, Volume 44*.

London: Sage.

Bailey, I. (2005) 'Overview of the Adult Literacy System in Ireland and Current Issues in its

Implementation' in Comings, J., Garner, B. and Smith, C. (eds.) (2005) *Review of Adult

Learning and Literacy, Volume 6: Connecting Research, Policy, and Practice: A Project of

the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.* Psychology Press.

Pp.197- 240.

Ball, S. J. (2000) 'Performativities and fabrications in the education economy: towards the performative society'. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 27 (2), 1-24.

Ball, S. J. (2001): 'You've been NERFed!' Dumbing down the academy: National Educational Research Forum: 'a national strategy ? consultation paper': a brief and bilious response, *Journal of Education Policy*, 16:3, 265-268

Barton, D. (1994) 'The social basis of literacy' in *Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language*. Oxford: Blackwell. Pp.33-43.

Barton, D. (2010) 'Vernacular Writing on the Web' in Barton, D. and Papen, U. (eds.) (2010) *The Anthropology of Writing: Understanding Textually-Mediated Worlds*. London: Continuum. Pp. 109-125.

Barton, D. and Hamilton, M. (2012) *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community*. London: Routledge.

Barton, D., Ivaniĉ, R., Appleby, Y., Hodge, R. and Tusting, K. (2007) *Literacy, Lives and Learning*. London: Routledge.

Barton, D. and Papen, U. (2005) *The Anthropology of Writing: Understanding Textually-Mediated Worlds*. London: Continuum.

Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R. and Tarule, J. M. (1986; 1997) *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Biesta, G., Field, J., Hodkinson, P., Macleod, F.J. and Goodson, I.F. (2011) *Improving Learning Through the Lifecourse: Learning Lives*. London: Routledge.

Bloome, D. (1997) Foreword in Barton, D. and Hamilton, M. (1998) *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community*. London: Routledge. Pp. xii-xv.

Bohl, N., (1995). Professionally administered critical incident debriefings for police officers. In M. Kurke (Ed.). *Police Psychology into the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: APA Publishers.

Boyd, S. and Uden, T. (2008) 'Skills for Life: Mainstream but not irreversible?' *Basic Skills Bulletin*, July 2008, Issue 65, pp. 1-2.

Brandt, D. (2009) *Literacy and Learning: Reflections on Writing, Reading, and Society*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, L. M. and Gilligan, C. (1992) *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's psychology and girls' development*. New York: Ballantine.

Burgess, A. (2008) 'The literacy practices of recording achievement: how a text mediates between the local and the global', *Journal of Educational Policy*, 23:1, pp.49-62.

Burgess, A., Freeman, S. and Wedgbury, A. (2010) 'RAPAL's Response to the BIS Consultation on Skills for Sustainable Growth'. Available at:

http://www.literacy.lancs.ac.uk/rapal/responseBIS2010.htm [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Cabinet Office (2010) 'The Coalition Document'. Available at:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/coalition-documents [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Cara, O., Litster, J., Swain, J. and Vorhaus, J. (2008) 'The Teacher Study: The impact of the

Skills for Life strategy on teachers – summary report'. London: NRDC.

Chamberlayne, P., Bornat, J. and Wengraf. T. (2000) *The Turn to Biographical Methods in*

Social Science: Comparative Issues and Examples. London: Routledge.

Chamberlayne, P., Bornat, J. and Wengraf, T. (eds.) (2000) *The Turn to Biographical*

Methods in Social Science: comparative issues and examples. London: Routledge.

Charmaz. K. (2003) 'Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis' in Holstein, J.

A. and Gubrium, J. F. (eds.) (2003) *Inside Interviewing: new lenses, new concerns*. Page

311.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000) *Research Methods in Education, Fifth*

Edition. London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education, Sixth*

Edition. London: Routledge.

Cohler, B.J. and Hammack, P.L. (2006) 'Making a Gay Identity: Life Story and the

Construction of the Coherent Self'. In McAdams, D.P., Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (eds.)

(2006) *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative*. American Psychological Association: Washington DC. Pp. 151-172.

Connelly, M. and Clandinin, J. (1987) 'On Narrative Method, Biography and Narrative Unities in the Study of Teaching'. *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 21(3), pp. 2-14.

Cresswell, J. W. (2003) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches, Second Edition*. London: Sage.

Crowther, J., Hamilton, M. and Tett, L. (eds.) (2001) *Powerful Literacies*. Leicester: NIACE.

Darville, R. (2002) 'Policy, accountability and practice in adult literacy: sketching an institutional ethnography' in *Adult Education and the Contested Terrain of Public Policy: Proceedings, Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education*, (eds) Mojab, S. and McQueen, W. University of Toronto. [Online] www.casae-aceea.ca/sites/casae/archives/cnf2002/2002_Papers/darville2002w.pdf
[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Denzin, N. K. (1989) *Interpretive Biography: Qualitative Research Methods Series 17*. London: Sage.

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2010a) 'Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy Document Executive Summary'. Available at:
http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1273-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy-summary

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2010b) 'A New Vision'. Available at:

http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2010/Nov/skills-for-sustainable-growth

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011a) 'New Challenges, New Chances:

Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System'.

Available at: http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/f/11-1380-

further-education-skills-system-reform-plan

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011b) 'New Challenges, New Chances:

Skills Investment Statement 2011-2014: Investing in a World Class Skills System'.

Available at: http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/11-1374-

skills-investment-statement-2011-2014.pdf

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011c) 'BIS Research Paper Number 57:

2011 Skills for Life Survey: headline findings'. Available at:

http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/0-9/11-1367-2011-skills-

for-life-survey-findings [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Department of Education and Science, Ireland (2000) 'Learning for Life: White Paper on

Adult Education'. Dublin: The Stationery Office. Available at:

http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/special/2000/whitepaper/adult_educ.pdf

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Department for Education and Skills (1997) *Meeting the childcare challenge: The national childcare strategy*. London: HMSO.

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (2007) 'World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England'. Available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.dius.gov.uk/reports_and_publications%20HIDDEN/leitch.aspx [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (2008) 'More than 2.25 million adults achieve first Skills for Life qualifications – News Release 035/2008'. London: HMSO.

Derbyshire, J., O'Riordan, C. and Phillips, R. (2005) 'Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work (revised edition)'. Dublin: National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA). Available at:

http://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/Guidelines%20for%20good%20adult%20literacy%20work_1.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Ecclestone, K. and Pryor, J. (2003) 'Learning Careers' or 'Assessment Careers'? The Impact of Assessment on Learning. *British Educational Research Journal*, August 2003, 29 (4).

Ecclestone, K. (2003) *Understanding Assessment and Qualifications in Post-Compulsory Education: Principles, Politics and Practice*. Leicester: NIACE.

Edward, S., Coffield, F., Steer, R. and Gregson, M. (2007) 'Endless change in the learning and skills sector: the impact on teaching staff'. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Volume 59, Number 2, pp. 155 – 173.

Edwards, R. and Usher, R. (2008) *Globalisation and Pedagogy: Space, Place and Identity, Second Edition*. London: Routledge.

Elliott, J. (2005) *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage.

Emmel, N., Hughes, K., Greenhalgh, J. and Sales, A. (2007) 'Accessing socially excluded people - Trust and the gatekeeper in the researcher-participant relationship', *Sociological Research Online*, March 2007, Volume 12, Issue 2.

Erben, M. (ed.) (1998) *Biography and Education: A Reader*. London: Routledge.

Field, J. (2008) *Social Capital, Second Edition*. London: Routledge.

Field, J. (2011) 'Biography and generation in social and educational research'. Available at: http://www.academia.edu/1035593/Biography_and_generation_in_social_and_educational_research [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin.

Gee, J. P., Hull, G. and Lankshear, C. (1996) *The New Work Order: behind the language of the new capitalism*. St Leonards: Allen and Unwin.

Gee, J. (1999) The New Literacy Studies and the "Social Turn". Available at:

http://www.schools.ash.org.au/litweb/page300.html

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Gee, J. P. (2011) *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method, 3rd Edition*. London: Routledge.

Gillham, B. (2005) *Research Interviewing: the range of techniques*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Gilligan C. (1982) *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gilligan, C. (1993) *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. London: Harvard University Press.

Gilligan, C., Spencer, R., Weinberg, M. K. and Bertsch, T. (2003) 'On the Listening Guide: A voice-centred relational method' in Camic, P. M., Rhodes, J. E. and Yardley, L. (eds.) (2003) *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association Press. Pp. 1-31.

Goodley, D., Lawthom, R., Clough, P. and Moore, M. (2004) *Researching Life Stories: Method, theory and analyses in a biographical age*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Goodson, I. (2001) *Life History Research in Educational Settings: learning from lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gutiérrez, K.D. (2008) 'Developing a Sociocritical Literacy in the Third Space'. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(2), p.148-164. Available at:

http://www.reading.org/publications/journals/rrq/v43/i2/abstracts/RRQ-43-2-Gutierrez.html

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Hamilton, M. (2001) 'Privileged Literacies: Policy, Institutional Process and the Life of the IALS'. *Language and Education*, Vol 15, No. 2&3, 2001, pp. 178-196.

Hamilton, M., Macrae, C. and Tett, L. (2001) 'Powerful Literacies: The Policy Context' in Crowther, J., Hamilton, M. and Tett, L. (2001) *Powerful Literacies*. Leicester: NIACE. Pp. 23-44.

Hamilton, M. and Hillier, Y. (2006) *Changing Faces of Adult Literacy, Language and Numeracy: A Critical History*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Hamilton, M. (2007) 'Reflections on agency and change in the policy process'. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, June 2007, 59 (2), pp. 249-260.

Hamilton, M. (2008) 'Relinquishing the Practices of a Lifetime: Observations of ageing, caring and literacies'. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*, Volume 16, 2008, No 2 & Volume 17, 2009, No 1, pages 63-74.

Hamilton, M. (2009) 'Putting words in their mouths: the alignment of identities within system goals through the use of Individual Learning Plans'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 35:2, 221-242.

Hamilton, M. and Pitt, K. (2011a) 'Changing Policy Discourses: Constructing Literacy Inequalities. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31, 2011, pp.596-605.

Hamilton, M. and Pitt, K. (2011b) 'Challenging Representations: Constructing the Adult Literacy Learner Over 30 Years of Policy and Practice in the United Kingdom'. *Reading Research Quarterly*, Volume 46, Issue 4, October 2011. Pp. 350-373.

Hamilton, M. (2012) *Literacy and the politics of representation*. London: Routledge.

Hanemann, U. (2005) 'Nicaragua's Literacy Campaign. Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006 Literacy for Life. UNESCO: Institute for Education. Available at:

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001460/146007e.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Hatt, B. (2007) 'Street Smarts vs. Book Smarts: The Figured World of Smartness in the Lives of Marginalized, Urban Youth'. *The Urban Review*, Vol.39, No.2, June 2007, pp.145-166.

HMSO (1999) *Modernising Government*. London: Crown Copyright.

Hodgson, A., Edward, S. and Gregson, M. (2007) 'Riding the waves of policy? The case of basic skills in adult and community learning in England'. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Volume 59, Number 2, pp. 213-229.

Hodgson, A., Spours, K. and Steer, R. (2008) 'All change for the learning and skills sector?' *Journal of Education and Work*, Volume 21, Number 2, April 2008, pp.115-131.

Hodkinson, P. (2008) 'Scientific Research, Educational Policy, and Educational Practice in the United Kingdom: the Impact of the Audit Culture on Further Education'. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies*, 2008, Vol 8, No.3, pp. 302-324.

Horrock, S. (2006) 'Scholarship, teaching and calculative thinking: a critique of the audit culture in UK nurse education'. *Nurse Education Today*, January 2006, Vol 26, Issue 1, pp.4-10.

House of Commons (2009) Skills for Life: Progress in Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Third Report of Session 2008-09. Available at:
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmpubacc/154/154.pdf
[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Iedema, R. and Scheeres, H. (2003) 'From Doing Work to Talking Work: Renegotiating knowing, doing and identity', *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 24, No.3, pp. 316-337.

Iedema, R. (2003) *Discourses of Post-Bureaucratic Organization*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Ivanič, R., Edwards, R., Barton, D., Martin-Jones, M., Fowler, Z., Hughes, B., Mannion, G., Miller, K., Satchwell, C. and Smith, J. (2009) *Improving Learning in College: Rethinking literacies across the curriculum.* London: Routledge.

Jeffrey, B. and Troman, G. (2004) 'Time for ethnography', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 30 No 4, pp. 535–48.

Johnstone, B. (2001) 'Discourse Analysis and Narrative'. In Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D. and Hamilton, H.E. (eds.) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis.* Oxford: Blackwell. Pp.635-649.

Jones, H. and Marriott, S. (1995) 'Adult Literacy in England, 1974-5: Why did it take so long to get 'On the Move'?' *History of Education*, 1995, 24 (4), 337-352.

Kalman, J. (1997) 'Sr. Gonzales and his daughters' in Taylor, D. (ed.) *Many Families, Many Literacies.* Greenwood Press. Pp.51-55.

Kerfoot, D. (2003) 'The problematic professional: Gender and the transgression of 'professional' identity'. In Barry, J., Dent, M. and O'Neill, M. (eds.) (2003) *Gender and the public sector: professionals and managerial change.* London: Routledge. Pp. 205-211.

Kerwin, M., Appleby, Y. and McCulloch, S. (2010) 'Professional qualifications for Literacy, Language and Numeracy teachers – some issues from the field'. *Research and Practice in Adult Literacy*, Vol.68, Spring 2010.

Knight, P. (2002) *Small Scale Research: Pragmatic Inquiry in Social Science and the Caring Professions*. London: Sage Publications.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970) *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Labour Party, The (1997) 'The 1997 Labour Party Manifesto'. Available at:

http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1997/1997-labour-manifesto.shtml

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Labov, W. (1972). The transformation of experience in narrative syntax. In W. Labov (Ed.) *Language in the inner city: Studies in the black English vernacular* (354-396). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Labov, W. (2006) 'Oral Narratives of Personal Experience'. Available at:

http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/Papers/FebOralNarPE.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Lankshear, C. (1993) 'Functional Literacy from a Freirean Point of View' in McLaren, P. and Leonard, P. (eds.) (1993) *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*. London: Routledge. Pp. 90-118.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leader, G. (2003) 'Lifelong learning: Policy and practice in further education'. *Education and Training*, 45 (7), 2003, pp. 361-371.

Leitch, S. (2006) 'Prosperity for All in the Global Economy – World Class Skills'. Available at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Light, A. (2006) 'Adding method to meaning: a technique of exploring people's experience with technology'. *Behaviour and Information Technology*, 25 (2), March-April 2006, pp.175-187.

Linford, N. (2008) *The hands-on guide to post-16 funding for school sixth forms, training providers, and further education colleges – 2008/09*. London: Edexcel.

Luttrell, W. (1997) *School-smart and Mother-wise: Working Class Women's Identity and Schooling*. London: Routledge.

Mace, J. (2002) 'The letter triangle' in *The give and take of writing*. Leicester: NIACE. Pp. 49-62.

Maclachlan, K. and Tett, L. (2006) 'Learning to change or changing the learning: Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland'. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Vol.12, No.2, Autumn 2006, pp.195-206.

Mauthner, N. S. and Doucet, A. (1997) 'Reflections on a Voice-centred Relational Method: Analysing Maternal and Domestic Voices' in Ribbens, J. and Edwards, R. (eds.) (1997)

Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative Research: public knowledge and private lives. London: Routledge. Pp. 119-146.

McAdams, D.P., Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (eds.) (2006) *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative*. American Psychological Association: Washington DC.

McLuhan (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Meyer, R. (2010) *Official Portraits and Unofficial Counterportraits of 'At Risk' Students: Writing Spaces in Hard Times*. London: Routledge.

Miller, K. E. (2004) 'Beyond the Frontstage: Trust, Access, and the Relational Context in Research With Refugee Communities'. *American Journal of Community Psychology,* Vol. 33, Nos. 3/4, June 2004, pp. 217-227.

Miller, R. L. (2000) *Researching Life Stories and Family Histories*. London: Sage.

Morgan, L. (2001) ''Captivated by Learning: The Study of An Innovative Organizational Strategy for Professional Development'. PhD Thesis, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University.

Moser, C. (1999) *A Fresh Start: Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy for Adults – Summary and Recommendations of the Working Group*. Sudbury: Department for Education and Employment. Summary report available at:

http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/mosergroup/ [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

National Audit Office (2008) Skills for Life: Progress in improving adult literacy and numeracy. London: The Stationery Office.

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (2011) 'New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme: a response from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, October 2011: Available at:

http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/NEW%20CHANCES%20response%20FINAL%2017%2010%2011.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

NRDC (National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy) (2012) 'Voices on the Page online storybank'. Available at:

http://www.nrdc.org.uk/voicesonthepage.asp [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Neef, D. (1999) *A Little Knowledge is a Dangerous Thing: Understanding Our Global Knowledge Economy*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Newman, J. (ed.) (2005) *Remaking Governance: Peoples, politics and the public sphere*. Bristol: Policy.

Office for National Statistics (2011) 'Statistical Bulletin: UK Government Deficit and Debt Under the Maastricht Treaty – March 2011'. Available at:

http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?content-type=Statistical+bulletin&pubdateRangeType=allDates&sortBy=none&sortDirection=none&

newquery=%27Government+debt+and+deficit%27&pageSize=100&applyFilters=true

[Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Office for National Statistics (2010a) 'Statistical Bulletin: Labour Market Statistics, May 2010'. Available at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/lms-may-2010/index.html [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Office for National Statistics (2010b) 'Focus on Consumer Price Indices - December 2010'. Available at:

http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?pageSize=100&sortBy=none&sortDirection=none&newquery=Focus+on+Consumer+Price+Indices%3A+Data+for+December+2010%E2%80%99 [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Osgood, J. (2009) 'Childcare workforce reform in England and 'the early years professional': a critical discourse analysis', *Journal of Education Policy*, 24 (6), 733-751.

Ozanne, J. L., Adkins, N. R. and Sandlin, J. A. (2005) 'Shopping for Power: How Adult Literacy Learners Negotiate the Marketplace'. *Adult Education Quarterly*, August 2005, 55 (4), pp. 251-268.

Pals, J. L. (2006) 'Constructing the "Springboard Effect": Causal Connections, Self-Making, and Growth Within the Life Story'. In McAdams, D.P., Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (eds.) (2006) *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative*. American Psychological Association: Washington DC. Pp. 175-199.

Power, M. (1997) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Raggatt, P.T.F. (2006) 'Multiplicity and Conflict in the Dialogical Self: A Life Narrative Approach'. In McAdams, D.P., Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (eds.) (2006) *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative*. American Psychological Association: Washington DC. Pp. 15-35.

Raider-Roth, M. (2005) *Trusting what you know: The high takes of classroom relationships*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Read-Write-Plus (2009a) 'Functional Skills Support Guidance for Practitioners'. Available at:

http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/resource/Functional+skills+support+guidance+for+practitioners/pdf/ [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Read-Write-Plus (2009b) *Skills for Life Update*. Issue 27, Spring 2009. DIUS.

Read-Write-Plus (2001) *The Adult Literacy Core Curriculum*. Available at:

http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Literacy/Adult%20literacy%20core%20curriculum/ [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Research and Practice in Adult Literacy (2011) 'Consultation on 'New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme: Feedback from RaPAL'. Available at:

http://www.literacy.lancs.ac.uk/rapal/activities/Docs/BIS%20consultation/BIS_New_Challen ges_RaPAL_responseFINAL.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Rose, M. (1989) *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educational Underclass*. London: Penguin.

Rosen, B. (1988) *And None of it was Nonsense*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sachs, J. (2001) 'Teacher professional identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes', *Journal of Educational Policy*, 16: 2, pp.149-161.

Saunders, M., Pearce, L. and Saunders, L. (2009) 'Evaluative Research in Low Trust Environments - The IRIS Project'. Educational Research Departmental Seminar, Lancaster University, 4 February 2009. Available at: http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/edres/event/2786/ [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Scottish Executive (2005) 'An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland'. Edinburgh: Communities Scotland. Available at: http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/files/ALNCurriculumFramework.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Seldon, A. (2007) *Blair's Britain, 1997 – 2007*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Selfe. C. L. and Hawisher, G. E. (eds.) (2004) *Literate Lives in the Information Age: Narratives on Literacy From the United States*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Semino, E. and Short, M. (2004) *Corpus Stylistics: Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation in a Corpus of English Writing*. London: Routledge.

Silverman, D. (2002) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. London: Sage.

Smith, D. E. (1990) *Texts, Facts and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling*. London: Routledge.

Smith, D. E. (1999) *Writing the social: critique, theory and investigations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D. E. (2005) *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Oxford: Altamira Press.

Somers, M. (1996) 'Where is sociology after the historic turn? Knowledge cultures, narrativity, and historical epistemologies.' In McDonald, T. (ed.) *The historic turn in the human sciences*. University of Michigan Press. Pp.53-89.

Spence, D. (1982) *Narrative Truth and Historical Method*. New York: Norton and Company.

Sreide, E. (2007) 'The public face of teacher identity - narrative construction of teacher identity in public policy documents', *Journal of Educational Policy*, 22(2), March 2007, pp.129-146.

St. Clair, R. (2010) *Why Literacy Matters: Understanding the Effects of Literacy Education for Adults*. Leicester: NIACE.

Stanistreet, P. (2012) 'What will the introduction of Functional Skills mean for adult learners?' *Adults Learning Extra: Making English and maths relevant. What Functional Skills mean for adult learners?*, NIACE, June 2012. Available at: http://www.niace.org.uk/news/what-functional-skills-mean-for-adult-learners [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Stewart, R. (1997) 'Constructing Neonarratives: A pluralistic approach to research'. *Journal of Art and Design Education*, Vol.16, No.13, 1997, Blackwell, pp.223-229.

Stewart, R. (2008) 'Constructing neonarratives: a pluralistic approach to research'. In Hickman, R. (ed.) *Research in Art and Design Education: issues and exemplars. Readings in Art and Design Education*. Intellect Books: Bristol. Pp. 157-163.

Strathern, M. (2000) 'Introduction: new accountabilities'. In Strathern, M. (ed.) *Audit Cultures: Anthropological studies in accountability, ethics and the academy*. London: Routledge. Pp. 1-18.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. California: Sage.

Street, B. (1984) *Literacy in Theory and Practice: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press*.

Street, B. (ed.) (1993) *Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stronach, I., Corbin, B., McNamara, O., Stark, S. and Warne, T. (2002) 'Towards an uncertain politics of professionalism: teacher and nurse identities in flux', *Journal of Educational Policy*, 17:1, pp.109-138.

Swales, J. M. (1990) *Genre Analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tolman, D. (2001) 'Echoes of sexual subjectification: Listening for one girl's erotic voice' in Tolman, D. L. and Brydon-Miller, M. (eds.) (2001) *From subjects to subjectivities: A handbook of interpretive and participatory methods*. New York: New York University Press. Pp. 130-144.

Troman, G. (2000) 'Teacher stress in the low-trust society', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 21 No 3, pp. 331–53.

Trowler, P. (2003) *Education Policy, Second Edition*. London: Routledge.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Tusting, K. (2009) 'I am not a "good" teacher; I don't do all their paperwork': Teacher resistance to accountability demands in the English *Skills for Life* strategy'. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*, Volume 17, No.3, 2009, pp. 6-26.

Varey, S. and Tusting, K. (2012) 'Form-filling, Power and the ILP: Tensions and tutor strategies in one adult literacy classroom', in J. Crowther, M. Hamilton and L. Tett (eds.) *More Powerful Literacies*. London: NIACE. Pp. 105-116.

Webster, L. and Mertova, P. (2007) *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method: an introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. London: Routledge.

Wenger, E. (2006) 'Communities of Practice: a brief introduction'. Available at: http://www.ewenger.com/theory/ [Accessed on 4 November 2012]

Wengraf, T. (2001) *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narrative and Semi-Structured Methods*. London: Sage.

Willis, P. (1983) *Learning to Labour: How working class kids get working class jobs.* Aldershot: Gower Publishing.

Wilson, A. (2003) 'Researching in the third space : locating, claiming and valuing the research domain'. In *Language, literacy and education: a reader*. Open University Press / Trentham Books: Stoke-on-Trent. Pp. 293-307.

Woodcock, C. (2005) 'The Silenced Voice in Literacy: Listening beyond Words to a "Struggling" Adolescent Girl', *Journal of Authentic Learning*, Volume 2, Number 1, September 2005, pp. 47-60.