



# Crossing Thresholds and Expanding Conceptual Spaces: Using Arts-Based Methods to Extend Teachers' Perceptions of Literacy

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## ABSTRACT

The context for this paper is a teacher education program for adult literacy practitioners at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland. This paper describes and reflects on the use of arts-based approaches to enhance these practitioners' conceptualizations of literacy, presenting their arts-based responses and their evaluations of the methods. The discussion raises questions about the inclusion of visual literacy in adult literacy teacher education programs.

## Introduction

This paper describes and reflects on a study of the use of arts-based approaches and methods on a teacher education program for adult literacy practitioners in Northern Ireland. The study explored the capacity for arts-based methods to enhance students'<sup>1</sup> understanding about the complexities of literacy and learning and the multiple ways in which meaning-making occurs.

*"I see literacy as basic English language, as reading and writing."  
(Student A comment: Start of learning program, September 2007)*

*"My understanding of literacy has changed dramatically over the past two years. In today's world as methods of communication have expanded, it is no longer simply being able to read and write. Due to the development of technology*

*such as computers, television and mobile phones it is almost impossible to shop, use banking systems or apply for a job without having a good understanding of literacy and technology. People with poor literacy skills find it difficult to integrate into society and to be independent and make their own choices and decisions. To me being literate should be more than being an economic asset to the government—it should be about people fulfilling their ambitions and reaching their full potential.”*

(Student A comment: end of learning program, May 2008)

The first statement above is an example of a student’s definition of literacy at the beginning of a teacher education program for adult literacy practitioners at Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland (NI). The limited perception of the nature of literacy in the first comment contrasts with that of her later, fuller account with its implication that literacy involves social and civic participation and multiple practices and forms of meaning-making. The remark about the “economic asset” is a reference to the Essential Skills for Living Strategy (Department for Employment and Learning [NI], 2002), which established standards for learning for adult literacy and numeracy and frameworks for teacher qualifications in NI. This Strategy was a response to the results of the International Adult Literacy Survey at the end of the twentieth century, which determined that for members of the population aged sixteen years and older in NI, over twenty percent were unable to complete basic everyday literacy tasks, such as finding information in a newspaper or from a travel timetable (OECD). Essential Skills for Living established the right to literacy and numeracy support for those who had scored at the lowest level; it outlined initiatives to address this deficit, emphasizing the importance of literacy and numeracy skills for personal contributions to the economy. The focus on employability in the Strategy has increased since its inception, with the majority of learners enrolled in programs no longer being the adults who enrolled in classes voluntarily to develop their personal literacy skills, but instead, young people, aged sixteen to nineteen years, who are required to complete their literacy and numeracy qualifications as a compulsory component of their vocational programs.

There is an inference in the second of Student A’s comments that individual skills and strengths which fall outside the parameters of the employability agenda in NI are not acknowledged, and that wider goals for individuals and communities are not being addressed. Shortly after the inception of the Essential Skills for Living policy here and other similar policies elsewhere in the United Kingdom, Crowther, Hamilton, and Tett (2001, p. 1) commented on what they described as a deficit model of literacy and numeracy embodied in such policies. They argue that learners are

judged by their inabilities to perform rather than their strengths, and called for the recognition and development of what are termed “wealth” models which respect the existing skills and multiple literacy practices of learners in communities. It is this concept of wealth models of literacy and learning that underpins the teacher education program described in this paper, one that aims to support practitioners in engaging with broader perceptions of literacy and learning.

## Background and Context

In 2002, Queen's University Belfast developed a teacher education qualifications program for adult literacy and numeracy tutors in order to support the Essential Skills for Living Strategy. Since that time, this has taken the form of a two-year, part-time course which aims to integrate the development of competence in the subject specialism of literacy or numeracy with the acquisition of a range of appropriate methods for teaching and learning. Students in the program attend weekly classes and also complete a teaching placement in a setting where literacy is taught. The program, in common with all teacher education in NI, is based on a model of reflective practice.

Traditionally, notions of reflective practice in teacher education programs conceive of reflection on learning and experience in terms of developing a set of reflexive cognitive skills in order to enhance and improve classroom practice. The program extends this conceptualization to take cognizance of the diversity of students' approaches to learning and teaching and the range of literacy practices of their learners and themselves. The “multiple perspectives model” of reflection that underpins the curriculum encompasses group as well as individual reflection and the use of action methods, and nonverbal as well as verbal forms of reflection (Queen's University Belfast, 2009; Tracey, 2006, 2007). This enhanced notion of reflection responds to Leitch and Day's (2000) call for “the development of more complex models of reflection, related to purpose, which take greater cognisance of existing knowledge from other disciplines, particularly those aspects of psychology concerned with cognitive processes including problem-finding, insight, wisdom, creativity” (pp. 186–187). Broader conceptualizations of reflection raise questions about how to extend approaches to reflection that embrace the aesthetic, creative, symbolic and emotional as well as the cognitive. Additionally, such a multiple-perspectives approach to reflection challenges traditional methods of assessment that tend to revert to assessing the written form through the medium of reflective learning journals and/or lesson evaluations.

## Design of the Study

This study comprises two main aims. The first is to describe and reflect upon participants' experiences in using arts-based approaches to explore and enhance their understandings of literacy and learning in the university teaching program, during one academic year. The second aim is to extend the application of appropriate criteria for assessing arts-based methods, centring on the development of multiple forms of reflection to develop practice.

Twenty-seven participants, aged between 22 and 58 years (Female: 20; Male: 7), agreed to participate in the ongoing study. Thirteen were enrolled in the first year of the literacy qualification program and the remaining fourteen in the second year. Previous teaching experience in adult literacy ranged from 0 to 48 months; an experience profile typical of tutors who had engaged in the program since its inception. A small percentage (15%) already had a teaching qualification, approximately half were graduates, and most were working full-time and studying part-time. These students were carrying out their teaching practice placements in a range of contexts including further education colleges, training organizations, state programs for the unemployed, the prison service, voluntary and community organizations and a hostel for homeless people. Although there was a variation in the ages and motivations of the learners enrolled in the literacy classes taught by these tutor-participants, the vast majority of the learners had recounted previous negative experiences of learning that had impacted on their self-esteem and on their willingness to engage in learning.

The study consisted of two phases. The first phase involved the inclusion of arts-based approaches to learning and reflection throughout the sessions on the literacy qualification program. During these sessions, students explored a variety of course themes relating to literacy and learning by means of creative thinking activities, storytelling and the development of posters and acrostic poems. Additionally, they created individual collages and designed and produced a range of resources to implement in their literacy practices. Students reflected on the efficacy of these arts-based methods and provided their responses to them through the completion of a written evaluation at the end of the course.

The second part of the study related to the consideration of fit-for-purpose course assessment in order to match an extended perspective on reflective learning. In year one, for instance, one assignment requires students to create a collective interactive exhibition in order to demonstrate their conceptualizations of literacy; the purpose of this assignment is to extend creative thinking and representation and to

encourage the use of alternative approaches to essay writing. The program also offers participants in both cohorts the opportunity for two assignments that use arts-based approaches as alternatives to the usual written essay-type reflections. These comprise a reflective learning journal and a portfolio of evidence about the teaching practice experience.

## Arts-Based Methods

Arts-based methods offer opportunities for expanding ways of knowing as well as building on what Eisner conceived of as the innate “artistry” involved in the craft of teaching (Eisner, 2002, pp. 382–383). As Higgs suggested (2008, p. 552), engaging with the arts has the potential to facilitate transformative learning. “Arts encourage a transcendental capacity. They allow the creator and the viewer to imagine possible ways of being, encourage the individual to move personal boundaries, and challenge resistance to change and growth.” At the same time, whatever the potential that the arts hold for learning and change, engagement with them can be challenging for teachers, who may not necessarily conceive of themselves as creative or who may not value creativity. A further issue for the use of arts-based methods is the uncertainty about the process as well as the outcomes. There are also conceptual challenges. Open-ended methods such as those involved in using approaches from the arts to address expanded models of reflection and of literacy require students to explore and integrate a range of conceptual spaces into their learning. The metaphor of expanding spaces in the title of this paper builds on Boden’s (2004) notion of creativity as the capacity to explore and transform conceptual spaces. Meyer, Land, and Davies (2006), exploring the difficulties involved in mastering new concepts, suggested that “any conceptual space will have terminal frontiers, bordering with thresholds into new conceptual areas” (p. 6).

Crossing frontiers and thresholds and exploring new conceptual areas can be daunting. Students require support for engaging in the journey; they need to identify and build on the prior knowledge and strengths they take with them into the unknown, and they need opportunities for engagement in creative explorations of the new areas of learning.

Tracey’s (2007) model of creative reflection provided a framework for the arts-based study on which this paper focuses. This model constitutes a structured approach to supporting student teachers in their engagement with arts-based

methods. It builds on Poincaré's notion of creativity as a series of phases of preparation, incubation, illumination and verification (Balzac, 2006). Creative reflection comprises the stages of preparation, play, exploration and synthesis, and includes individual and group activities such as creative thinking exercises, playing games, drama, creative writing, and art-making. The preparation stage acknowledges the uncertainties of the creative process and provides "threshold activities" (Tracey, 2007) to support engagement. These activities do not require participants to generate creative artifacts, but to respond to existing images. The second stage, play, offers opportunities to explore ideas in an unthreatening environment. Typical activities include creative thinking exercises and the creation of acrostic poems and collage-making. The third stage requires a more deliberative exploration of ideas, whereby individuals and groups design and produce artifacts such as films, poems, artwork, pieces of music and dramas. The final stage, synthesis, involves individual and group reflection on the processes of learning and meaning-making and on applications to students' practice.



Fig. 1: Using arts-based approaches: results and reflections

This part of the paper presents the results of students' engagement in arts-based methods and approaches, providing information about the nature of the artifacts created and their responses to these. The images in this paper are representative examples of the work; further examples appear on the Web site which exhibits this work, including films and presentations.<sup>2</sup>

## Phase 1: Use of Arts-Based Methods in Class

At the end of the academic year, students completed written evaluations on the arts-based methods and approaches, reflecting on the extent of their enjoyment in this type of work as well as its capacity to enhance their learning and influence their literacy practices in their various professional contexts. In general, there was little variation in the responses, although students at the end of the first year of the program tended to maintain that the method might have less application to their actual teaching practice than those at the end of the two-year program. This result might be indicative of the comparative lack of teaching experience of the first-year students.

The following results that comment on the use of arts-based methods are divided into four main categories: reflections on images used as threshold activities to stimulate discussion and idea sharing; creative writing activities; images and artifacts created through the use of art materials; and digital images (still and moving). The focus of the reflection and discussion in this part of the paper emphasizes image-based categories, rather than that of creative writing. This is in order to illuminate the exploration of multiple literacies in general, and to lead into a discussion on visual literacy in the following section.

### **Category 1: Reflections on images (threshold activities)**

A wide array of images from the media and art postcards was used to stimulate discussion and idea sharing on learning, literacy and creativity in general and course themes in particular. Students made individual selections and shared responses suggested that these activities were helpful for supporting reflection on learning experiences in general. As one participant indicated: "Images really helped me to reflect and my learners to do the same." Another participant commented that the use of images was helpful because "Learners in my organization are extremely visual." The activities also had specific uses: variously, they "helped with storytelling"; they also supported creativity: and most typically this type of activity was seen as valuable for self and others because it "Allows the imagination to run wild but in a constructive way."

## Category 2: Creative writing activities

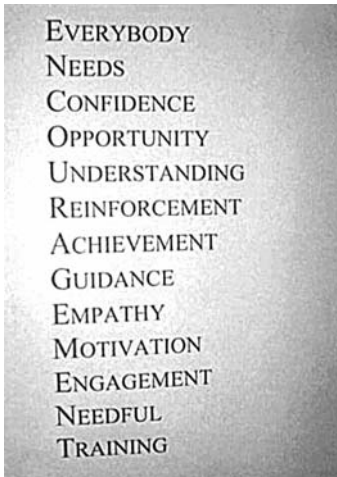


Fig. 2: Acrostic poetry

This form of poetry was used to explore the themes of literacy, motivation and reflective practice. Acrostic poems, simply described, consist of a word written vertically, with each successive line of the poem starting with the first letter of the word. While this method is discussed within creative writing, it also has visual components in its incorporation of aspects of visual design. Students' responses suggested the usefulness of this approach for their literacy practice; these included that it: "Can be adapted and used on a variety of areas and learning levels" and "Learners like reflecting on their disabilities though poetry." One participant commented on the personal learning involved in engaging with acrostic poetry: "New to me, found interesting. Allows for creativity."

Other forms of poetry included shape and spatial poems. There was a more guarded response to these forms of expression, with one student declaring: "Yes, there are many benefits to using poetry in the classroom but my students don't enjoy it."

## Storytelling

Students worked in groups and composed and presented stories based on their response to a selection of images, which they subsequently developed into a group narrative. The versatility of this approach was acknowledged: "I have incorporated storytelling into my class and found it useful and important to learners," and it was also noted that "Learners with [learning] difficulties enjoy this activity." There were, however, contradictory responses regarding the impact of storytelling on the students' own learning: while one declared, "I reflected much more on my learning through this," another stated: "I struggled to see how this would benefit my learning but it was an OK icebreaker in teaching practice."



### Category 3: Images and artifacts created through the use of art materials

#### *Creating resources for teaching*

These resources included image-based activities to stimulate discussion, and collections of images for storytelling and theme-based reading and writing tasks. Responses to these activities suggested their usefulness for practice: illustrative examples of positive responses were that they: "Provided great ideas" and "It really helped me in my teaching practice."



Fig. 3: Collage-making

While there are different forms of collage-making, the course focuses on the practice of individuals arranging on a piece of card or paper selected words and images from magazines and newspapers to explore an idea or theme connected with literacy. The collage depicted is a student's reflection on the processes involved in learning literacy. Responses to the use of collage indicated its relevance to practice: It was "something that I could use with my learners," and that such a method was "great for kinaesthetic learning sessions." One student reflected in a course assignment on her use of collage in the final session of the literacy course which she taught in a hostel for homeless people:

*Although none of the learners in my class made it as far as accreditation while I was there, we did use the final session as a time of acknowledgement. The learners participated in collage making (something none of the men had ever tried before), with the theme "What I have learnt about myself." Afterwards we engaged in a discussion about the collages, what they meant to us, and how much we had learnt about ourselves, as learners and as people, through the classes. I acknowledged the work each individual learner had done and highlighted their progression with particular note to some of the more difficult areas in their literacy learning that they had overcome. Everyone, myself included, came away from that final session inspired by the potential and possibilities we had seen for ourselves and each other.*

This comment indicates the potential for the development of self-awareness and confidence for literacy learners through the process of collage-making; it also demonstrates the significant role which the tutor plays in facilitating such a process. As a multidimensional form of meaning-making that juxtaposes image and text, collage provides opportunities to identify new understandings of the relationships between word meanings and visual symbols and how the individual learner relates to these; it thus provides a process for crossing thresholds into expanding conceptual spaces.



Fig. 4: Using art materials to reflect on course themes

This image represents the outcome of a group reflection on the nature of ideal environments for teaching and learning. The shape of the classroom, the open windows and roof and the unconventional seating arrangements suggest that the process of creating this piece allowed the students to expand their ideas about learning spaces. Responses to this activity were all positive, including: "I enjoyed this," "It was great to share ideas with each other," and "It took me out of my comfort zone. I surprised myself."

#### Category 4: Using digital images

The information in this section is a brief summary of the findings which are presented and addressed in more detail in Mullan and Tracey's report (in press) on student responses to the use of digital images and technologies in their learning. These digital images took two forms: photographs of aspects of individual teachers' practice and the incorporation of these images into short films, using the software package, Windows Moviemaker®. With reference to the first use of images, one student wrote that this "really enabled me to see my teaching through the eyes of my learners—especially when they took their own photographs!" Another related comment was that "... photos and images of my practice provided the opportunity to show others the nature of my teaching and the range of learners."

## Phase 2: Assessment: Responses to Use of Arts-Based Methods in Course Assignments

#### Creating exhibitions

This assignment in the first year of the program required students to create an interactive group exhibition on any aspect of literacy on which they chose to focus. They used a range of arts-based approaches to express the themes of their exhibitions, including posters and creative artifacts, creative writing activities, dance and mime. Their responses acknowledged that "this was a great learning activity," and that "it allows for imagination, creativity and collaboration with peers." Another participant suggested that this kind of activity generated "Good ideas for learners." There was one negative response: "I felt this was not a useful activity as more time was spent gathering resources than thinking about the learning." This suggests the importance of allowing for preparation time in using arts-based approaches. The diverse responses to the assignment indicate that these approaches enhance students'

capacities to acknowledge the existence of multiple literacies and therefore to engage with the implications of incorporating these into their practice.

The second element of the assignment required students to write a reflection on the process of designing and participating in an exhibition. One noted: "Images were used in my reflection on the group project and I felt that they did help when writing up my reflection. I used them to enhance the presentation and to 'jog my memory' of the presentation."

### Use of arts-based methods in other assignments

This part of the paper describes and reflects on student responses about the opportunity to use alternative methods instead of the usual written reflections compiled in a reflective learning journal and portfolio assignment. The table below shows the extent to which the students across the two cohorts adopted the use of arts-based methods within these two assignments.

*Table 1: Use of Arts-Based Methods in Course Assignments*

Response	Reflective Learning Journal: Year 1 (n=13)	Reflective Learning Journal: Year 2 (n=14)	Teaching Practice Portfolio: Year 1 (n=13)	Teaching Practice Portfolio: Year 2 (n=14)
No use of images/arts-based methods	4	3	1	0
Use of existing images as focus for reflection	2	6	5	7
Images created for assignment (drawings/cartoons/games)	3	3	2	6
Use of photographs	0	0	1	2
Film (Windows Moviemaker®)	1	1	1	2
Collage	2	0	1	2
1. Acrostic poetry	2	7	4	6
2. Storytelling/creative writing	1	1	2	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27</b>



The Snakes and Ladders game above was included in the final reflection in the students' teaching practice portfolio. This student used the game to synthesize and reflect on her barriers to learning as well as her support systems.

The following comment demonstrates the capacity for film to enhance reflection:

*I find self-reflection quite difficult. I find it hard to express myself through words—I can't seem to be able to state how I feel using only language. Being able to use [Windows] Moviemaker® greatly enhanced my ability to reflect not only on what I had learned but also on what my learners had learned. To say all I wanted to, using only words, would have required me to write page after page! Using Moviemaker® allowed me to address the many intricacies of my reflection in a fuller and more interesting format.*

While other students acknowledged the effectiveness of film in supporting reflection and learning, the time required to make a film prohibited the majority from doing so. One student noted: "It's a great idea and I liked learning how to use Windows Moviemaker®, but I just didn't have the time for this." Eight (29.6%) of the students' final comments on the use of arts-based methods for their assignments referred to the lack of sufficient time for this. This points to the need to allocate time in teacher education programs for developing the range of arts-based methods realistically and effectively.

Only one student declared that he or she would not have used arts-based methods for his/her assignments, under any circumstances:

*I am not a creative person and prefer written theory and learning to creative displays. I have used some aspects in my teaching practice—but reluctantly! I enjoy using some creativity in creating (teaching) resources, but not really for learning.*

This comment is a reminder of diversity amongst learners and in their approaches to learning, and an indicator that the use of arts-based methods may not be suitable or acceptable for all students and learners. At the same time, it points to the need for student teachers to experience methods and approaches to which some of their learners might respond positively, even if they do not do so themselves.

## Discussion

### Students' responses

All except one of the students' responses to their experiences of arts-based approaches indicate that these methods supported them in engaging with a variety of forms of meaning-making and in developing methods for enhancing their practice. This outcome supports Leitch's comment (2008, p. 150) that "... arts-based methods of inquiry still wrestle for mainstream acceptance in the world of educational research but are nevertheless rich in their capacity to create opportunities for teachers to reflect and self-direct."

The students' responses to exploring and using images in both parts of the study suggest that the experience has enhanced their awareness that literacy and learning involve complex processes of meaning-making. These processes include active engagement through play and art-making, as well as reflection on this engagement to synthesize understanding. A further learning from the process is that the capacity to communicate ideas can be developed through non-text based methods as well as through the more traditional literacy practices of reading and writing.

An analysis of the images created by the students and an exploration of their reflections on these images suggest the capacity for arts-based methods to support different approaches to learning and meaning-making in literacy. These approaches vary in terms of the degree to which the arts-based methods are a core part of the process, or peripheral to it. A continuum of the role of arts-based methods in literacy is proposed. At the peripheral end is the use of images such as photographs and preexisting images to illustrate and support the content of text. In the middle of the continuum are the arts-based methods which are used to generate and play with ideas, such as collage and acrostic poetry. At the end of the continuum are deliberative uses of methods to synthesize, represent and communicate ideas, such as films and other works of art. The latter however require opportunities for the development of significant skill sets and the time to develop these must be taken into consideration in the design of such programs.

## Implications for Teacher Education for Literacy Practitioners

Alberto, Fredrick, Hughes, McIntosh, and Cihak (2007) argued that perceiving literacy as a capacity for reading and writing limits the participation in learning of those with severe learning difficulties; they proposed instead a broad notion of literacy as “obtaining information from the environment,” suggesting that this “may be accomplished in a variety of modes, only one of which is reading words” (p. 234). Their study explored the notion that reading pictures and logos might be a primary means for obtaining information for learners with learning difficulties. This study has implications for the teacher education program which is the focus of this paper. Many of our students have learners with learning disabilities in their groups: either one or two individuals with disabilities such as dyslexia, or whole groups in special educational settings. In order to address the needs of a diverse range of learners in their practice, literacy practitioners require confidence and competence in the processes of creating and making meaning from images.

This study concurs with the suggestions of Elkins (2002) and Metros and Woolsey (2006) that visual literacy should be a component of all learning programs in higher education to acknowledge the visual aspects of culture and learning. The literacy curriculum established by the Essential Skills Strategy in NI requires learners to demonstrate their ability to use images effectively in one of their assignments. Learners are required to produce a portfolio of evidence based on the exploration of a relevant theme and to include in this evidence an image which supports this theme, as well as a reflection on it. The criteria for this use of image are under-elaborated. Supporting practitioners in teacher education programs to reflect on the development and production of images has potential for enhancing their practice. A useful model of visual literacy for programs of literacy teaching and learning is Langford’s (2003) conceptualization of it as the skills of interpreting, decoding, analyzing and synthesizing the images around us. Rose (2001) has designed a set of questions which students might pose to enhance their awareness of the nature of the image itself, its production, and the role of the audience in the production. These questions might be added to Langford’s model to support the decoding process.

Griffin (2008) introduced another dimension to learning about visual literacy by pointing out that because students in the twenty-first century are receptive to visual images, this does not necessarily mean they are knowledgeable about them or about aspects of visual design. They need to engage with images more closely to support their awareness. The results of this exploratory study of arts-based approaches



in the Queen's University Belfast teacher education program suggest that students' creation of images enhances their awareness of the processes involved in the design of these images.

The inclusion of visual literacy in curricula for learning and teaching literacy raises questions about assessment, including the appropriate criteria for judging the aesthetic qualities of the work. A further question is about the proportion of the grades which should be awarded for each of the components of visual literacy. The coexistence of visual and text-based forms of literacy in a learning program poses a different set of questions: about the extent to which these forms incorporate similar epistemological frameworks, and therefore might be evaluated referring to similar standards. There are limitations in seeking a single set of criteria for understanding both visual and text-based literacy. Elkins maintained that images should not be analyzed in the same manner as written forms of communication, rejecting notions of visual literacy as the capacity "to identify images and to parse them according to the ways they refer to the world" (2002, p. 137). A more critical engagement with both text-based and visual literacy is necessary in teacher education programs for literacy practitioners in order for them to understand the complex and diverse processes of meaning-making.

A framework for including and assessing arts-based methods in teacher education needs to incorporate spaces for reflection on the experiences of engaging with and making images. This supports Hoggan's (2009) assertion that,

The use of images, whether of one's own or another's creation, can reveal our otherwise hidden worldview assumptions. Those hidden assumptions have a profound impact on the way we think and make meaning from our experiences. It is in the purposeful estrangement from those assumptions, envisioning of alternative realities, and critical examination of both old and new points of view — although not necessarily in a conscious and rational way — that transformative learning occurs. (p. 73)

## Conclusion

This paper began with examples of practitioners' conceptualizations of literacy before and at the end of a teacher education program. The focus of the paper was on the potential for arts-based methods to facilitate expanded conceptualizations. It

is not possible to claim that the elaborated notions of literacy which 32 (96%) of the students articulated at the end of the arts-based study last year are a direct result of their engagement with arts-based methods. Nevertheless, some of the students' reflection on literacy in the final course evaluation in June 2009 referred to issues which might be related to the use of arts-based methods:

*"I have learnt about visual literacy, for example, which I had not considered before."*

*"I now see literacy as a complex web of realities—different for different learners and communities."*

*"My definition of literacy now includes speaking and listening, also visual literacy and social practice view of literacies."*

*"I understand that literacy is much more than just writing, that it takes many forms and this impacts on the resources I use."*

*"The course has opened up for me the creative and powerful aspects of literacy. It has also made me aware that I have neglected my own development in this area."*

## Notes

1. The terms "students," "practitioners" and "teachers" are used interchangeably in this paper to refer to the participants in the teacher education program described in this paper, while the word "learners" refers to the members of the groups they teach.
2. See <http://www.qub.ac.uk/eskills>.

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