

**Exploring and developing spaces among adult
education practitioners for online and arts-based
reflection**

March 2011 – June 2012



**A REPORT FOR THE STANDING CONFERENCE ON
TEACHER EDUCATION NORTH AND SOUTH**

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Acknowledgements

The authors of the report would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by SCoTENS to enable the project to be carried out.

Thanks to project team members, Jim Mullan from QUB and Vicky Phelan from WIT. We are also grateful to Helen Murphy, Head of the Literacy Development Centre, and Mary Fenton, Head of Adult Education at WIT, for their generous support and contributions to the project.

Thanks also to the students who took part so willingly and took so many risks in using new tools and forms of assessment and sharing their work so generously.

Contents

page

1.	Abstract	5
2.	Introduction	6
3.	Background: Project Partners	6
4.	Literacy and Reflective Practice at WIT and QUB	8
5.	Theoretical frameworks underpinning SCoTENS project	11
6.	Aims of the project	12
7.	Methodology	13
8.	Online reflections and technologies event	15
9.	Seminar on arts-based approaches to reflection, 21 April 2012	19
10.	Reflections on arts-based reflective activities	25
11.	21 April event: activities and outcomes	28
12.	Summary of evaluations from	33
13.	Theoretical frameworks for data analysis	34
14.	Outcomes of the project	37
15.	Benefits of the project	41
16.	Dissemination of findings	42
17.	Conclusions	43
18.	References	45
19.	Appendices	48
	A: Course assignment briefs QUB	
	B: WIT assignments	
	C: Self-assessment of QUB MovieMaker films	
	D: Assessment of group presentations	
	E: Student assignments	

1. Abstract

The research project was a partnership between the School of Education at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and the School of Education and Lifelong Learning in Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT). The project aimed to investigate the meaning and relevance of arts-based and on-line reflection for the professional development of Adult Education teachers.

The project took the form of an action research inquiry into the use of arts based reflection for a cohort of Adult Literacy tutors in WIT and QUB, as well as for a cohort of teachers from mainstream education on a module at WIT. The project was located within the practice of both organisations. The more traditional model of individual and introspective reflection in teacher education was extended to incorporate more social and creative forms of reflection. Each institution gave their students opportunities to use on line tools such as MovieMaker, Photostory, electronic collage building, Tagxedos and Wordle, as well as creative writing and paper based collage making, as a means to connect with the affective and creative domain of learning and explore new perspectives on their practice.

Adult Literacy practitioners from both institutions came together to a seminar where they shared some of the artefacts they had created, to assist in their exploration of three dominant themes in Adult Education. During the seminar, they also engaged in a highly creative and collaborative cross -border project to encourage further critical reflection. Some of the key outcomes of this project include: the development of a *Creative Process Reflection* model to underpin the arts- based activities and support reflection in a more conscious and structured way; the emergence of a discourse to strengthen the professional identity of tutors and challenge the notion of tutors as mere technicians in the classroom; the re -examination of what is meant by creativity and what it could contribute to the national and International discussions which are taking place about how literacy is measured and valued and the evaluation of some online tools as supports for blended and distance learning opportunities. Participants also explored their professional identities as reflective practitioners, challenging the idea of teachers as mere technicians in the classroom. The project made important links between theories of creativity and how these can be put into practice and reaffirmed the affective as well as the cognitive dimension of learning.

2. Introduction

This report presents the outcomes of an exploration of arts-based and online reflection in teacher education. The research was a partnership between the School of Education at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and the School of Education and Life long Learning in Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

Relatively little research has been undertaken into the North/ South adult education sector of teacher education or into arts-based and online reflection in teacher education. This project aimed to build on the experiences and expertise of both organisations in terms of these forms of reflection. The project took the form of an action research inquiry into reflective practice in the context of adult education, undertaken in collaboration between Queen's University Belfast and Waterford Institute of Technology from March 2011 to June 2012. The project was located within the practice of both organisations, bringing students involved in professional development programmes for adult educators together.

3. Background: Project Partners

This project was a collaboration between course tutors Geraldine Mernagh, WIT, and Shelley Tracey, QUB, and their students. Jim Mullan, QUB and Vicky Phelan, Literacy Development Centre, IT and Blended Learning consultant for WIT, made a major contribution to the process, especially to a session on online reflection in January 2012.

The Queen's University participants were students enrolled on a tutor qualifications programme for adult literacy and numeracy (Essential Skills) practitioners in Northern Ireland. Following the International Adult Literacy Surveys of the late 1990s, the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland created the Essential Skills for Living Strategy (2002), which established both literacy and numeracy provision for learners and a tutor qualifications framework. In September 2002, Queen's University Belfast set up the teacher education programme which

supported the strategy. The participants in the SCoTENS project were enrolled on the second year of the two-year part-time programme, and were completing their qualifications as literacy tutors. There were fifteen participants, five male and ten female, aged between 30 and 50. Most of them had between one and three years of experience in the adult literacy sector, and a range of professional experience in business, training, community work, health and social care and public sector organisations.

The research project in Waterford Institute of Technology focused on two modules which were already exploring reflection and creativity. The “Language and Power” module, which joined the collaborative seminar on April 21st 2012, was part of the Bachelor in Adult Education programme. This programme was developed and co-managed by a partnership between WIT, the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) and the key stakeholders in the Adult Literacy sector in 1995. It responded to a need identified by adult literacy practitioners for a third level programme to assist in upgrading their skills and also to gain recognition and accreditation for the knowledge and skills accumulated through their work practice.

The programme is run from the Literacy Development Centre at WIT, and receives funding from the Department of Education and Skills to deliver programmes nationally at Levels 6, 7 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. Ten participants (one male and nine females) all of whom were experienced practitioners working in some aspect of the adult literacy service, agreed to participate in the joint seminar with the QUB practitioners. The second module, “Reflective Practice” in the MA in Education programme, was offered in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning from the Department of Adult Education. Over the past eight years, the School has developed a suite of teacher education programmes to reflect the needs of adult students in an ever-changing landscape. Fourteen experienced teachers (two males and twelve females) working in primary, secondary and higher level education were invited to get involved in the project work and to attend a movie maker technology workshop with Jim Mullan from Queen’s on January 14th. These experienced practitioners were keen to re-energise their perspectives and practice in the classroom or to move to another sector within education.

4. Literacy and reflective practice at QUB and WIT

Traditionally, notions of reflective practice in teacher education programmes conceive of reflection as cognitive skills. The team at Queen's University Belfast extends this conceptualisation to encompass group as well as individual reflection, the use of action methods, and nonverbal as well as verbal methods. This enhanced notion of reflection responds to Leitch & Day's call (2000, 186-187) 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"*.

Extended models of reflection not only enhance student teachers' awareness of effective practice; they also provide opportunities to engage with broader understandings of literacy. Most students start off their first year of their learning programme with traditional perceptions of literacy as the ability to read and write. As one student commented at the end of the learning programme in 2008:

"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."

The Waterford team had a strong tradition of encouraging literacy practitioners to interrogate some of the mainstream assumptions about literacy and to extend their understanding of literacies within the 21st century. Students explained how their understanding of literacy had shifted to embrace "Literacy as fluid, complex,

changing”; they compared the role of the literacy tutor to one of someone who is “uncorking a bottle to let life flow’. They above all realised that “as tutors we should add to [the literacies] that the learner has and not taken from them” (Mernagh & O’ Brien, 2009).

Since 1995, the School of Education in WIT has been committed to promoting reflective practitioners through its teacher education programmes. It is well documented in the literature that teachers are unclear about how to reflect and what is involved in this process (Moon, 2004). The process for many teachers does not come naturally. McKenzie (2009) responded to this lack of structure by creating a model for reflection, PERHAPS, which extended reflection beyond a personal introspective process to a more social activity which also supported teachers to reflect on the processes as well as the outcomes of reflection. The PERHAPS model was piloted with teachers on the Masters in Education programme in Waterford Institute of Technology during this research project.

Teachers also experience difficulty putting language on their reflections as learners and teachers in the classroom. They particularly commented on the power of working with the affective dimension of learning. In effect it appeared that teachers were acknowledging that there are other ways of knowing (Heron 2008, Belenky 1986) and that this knowledge can best be accessed by incorporating non-language based approaches, drawing on metaphor and imagery, the use of metaphor (Hunt, 2006) and experiential learning (Boud 1985). In response, Mernagh (2009) developed the use of visual learning journals for teacher participants in the BA and on the Masters in Education programme as an extension of the narrative learning journal originally used in these programmes .

The PERHAPS model also proved useful in helping teachers to reflect in a way which was not only more structured but also more natural.. Many teachers reported their preference for reflection in dialogue with others. (McKenzie ,2009)The use of the PERHAPS module was an important framework for emphasising the social and more structured dimensions to learning, while the partnership with QUB allowed for

the deepening and extension of the arts as a way of extending the type of knowledge and meanings which teachers can access about their classrooms.

This extended model of reflection which consciously built upon some of the key issues in the reflective practice literature, appeared to address some of the issues which students experienced with the notion of reflective practice and how to write reflectively in their course assignments. It also supported students in enhancing their conceptualisations of literacy: while they began their courses with limited notions of literacy as reading and writing, the use of arts-based methods in their course sessions and their assignments culminated in broader understandings of literacy as a complex set of communication practices, rooted in socio-cultural models of learning (Tracey, 2009) and an understanding of learning as multimodal. This was supported by an exploration of the use of still and moving images as tools for reflection (Mullan and Tracey, 2010).

5. Theoretical frameworks underpinning SCoTENS project

Models of reflection and reflective practice are embedded in theories and ideas about learning. This project drew on socio-constructivist models of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1960), in which meaning is socially constructed, and scaffolded by an interlocutor or MKO (More Knowledgeable Other). In the collaboration between ourselves as tutors and researchers, we engaged in a dialogue in which in turns we took the roles of learner about each other's practice or aspects of expertise about reflection and creativity. This process was helpful for exploring and deconstructing the processes of learning in which our students would be engaged, as well as in order to share and build up our combined knowledge and expertise. To create a rich of shared understanding, Mernagh and Tracey met face to face and communicated online on a regular basis throughout the project. Our close collaboration and interaction and the joy, excitement and uncertainties which we experienced in working together reminded us of the important role which emotion plays in learning, both as inhibitor and motivator.

Participatory models of learning and research, such as those involved in our project, need to take cognisance of not only of the affective aspects of learning, but also barriers to participation, such as lack of confidence about one's artistic skills or creativity, or about meeting and presenting work to an unfamiliar group of students. We therefore drew on Wenger's "communities of practice" model (1998) to develop a sense of shared values and common goals. The notion of collaborative reflection which we incorporated in our *Creative Process Reflection* model builds on the shared values and discourses of the community.

An important dimension of the communities of practice model is the notion of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which validates the learner's initial lack of experience and knowledge as well as the development of these. Our community of practice of adult educators inquiring into the use of arts-based methods needed to make spaces for different levels of participation, as well as opportunities to explore assumptions and ideas about creativity, literacy and practice.

6. Aims of the project

Both WIT and QUB students struggled to address the needs of their learners, most of whom lacked confidence due to past negative experiences of learning; this impacted on their willingness to engage in learning and on their self-belief as learners. The collaboration between WIT and QUB in the SCoTENS project was based on a shared belief that arts-based methods have the capacity to enhance inclusion (Miles, 2007). The project drew on the work of Eisner, who conceived of teaching as a form of artistry, and proposed that engaging with the arts illuminates the processes of learning and knowing (Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995). The partnership was rooted in the deeply embedded understanding that when we are working in education we are above all working in a deeply human activity.

This project aimed to identify current good practice in reflection in the partner institutions, and to offer opportunities for sharing and developing effective examples of arts-based and online reflection. It also intended to explore possibilities for developing peer-led reflective practice networks for adult educators.

7. Methodology

The project took the form of an action research inquiry, building on participatory and inclusive models of action research which consulted and involve participants in the process rather than acting as objects of the inquiry. It was important to include teachers in the process so that they could develop their confidence in applying the methods which they were experiencing to their practice. Potential ethical issues for the project were identified, to do with the unpredictable outcomes of arts-based research and issues concerning online reflection, including access to online work and confidentiality. These issues were be addressed by obtaining full written consent for the use of video and artefacts produced by arts-based work as research data. With regard to online work, the usual professional protocols were respected in all discussion forums.

The main focus of the project was a collaboration between QUB and WIT tutors, Shelley Tracey and Geraldine Mernagh, which investigated the engagement of students on teacher education programmes for adult literacy practitioners in arts-based reflection. This involved planning a combined session and course assignments, which were tailored to the needs of the specific groups. The Waterford assignments were: A Visual Reflective Journal- Extending the limits of Language through Metaphor and the creation of an individual artefact (digital story, electronic collage, creative writing) and a critical Reflection on the creation of a creative artefact in partnership with QUB at the event on 21st April (Language and Power Block 2 BA Ad. Ed). The module on Reflective Practice was assessed with a visual learning journal and the creation of a digital story about how their understanding of reflective practice and its relevance to practice had developed. (Reflective Practice, MA Ed.) The QUB Assignment 4, which focused on reflective learning, was adapted for the SCoTENS project and required students to create a film using Windows MovieMaker, to present this work to their peers along with a handout on the theme of their film and to self-assess. Three themes were selected for the project, and the WIT and QUB students allocated evenly to each of these groups so that they could

work together on these at a combined event at Marino Institute, Dublin, in April 2012.

The themes were:

1. *Using creative methods for learning and teaching literacy*
2. *Using writing to enhance learner voice and learning identities*
3. *Popular culture and representations of literacy (film and TV)*

While the aspect of online reflection was incorporated into the WIT/QUB collaborative event, it was decided to enhance and triangulate this work by exploring the use of technology with the WIT group completing the Reflective Practice module. Unlike the other participants, this group of teachers was not involved in adult education. The responses of these teachers to using Windows MovieMaker had potential to offer insights into the use of this software, and to help us identify whether some of the ideas which we were implementing with adult educators might be applied to teachers in other sectors. The online event took place on the 14th of January, 2012, and allowed for the exploration of issues which students might experience with Windows MovieMaker. It also afforded QUB the opportunity to contribute their experience and expertise with technology-based reflection to the WIT team, who welcomed this new initiative. The differences and parallels between adult educators and school teachers were not explored in depth in this project, because they participated in different aspects of the project and because we were interested in the commonalities of the processes rather than distinct differences.

8. Online reflection and technologies event 14th January 2012

An Essential Skills team member from QUB, Jim Mullan, went to Waterford to explore online reflection tools with students on the WIT Reflective Practice module in preparation for a workshop on Windows MovieMaker. The module extended the reflective practice model to include metaphor, image and collective reflection.

You understand how to act from knowledge ,but you have not yet seen how to act from not knowing. Chuang Tsu trans. 1974

The introduction of metaphor and image into this module hoped to go some way towards addressing the limitations experienced by teachers in being able to tell all that they know (Atkinson and Claxton, 2000). Hunt (2006) describes metaphor as a vital link between the private and often idiosyncratic world of the felt -reality. She suggests that it is an important element in understanding the movement of intuitive knowledge into professional practice. One of the aims for the module was to test the idea that the cognitive and the affective could be important complementary tools to enable teachers to gain a deep insight into their classroom (Mernagh, O'Brien 2008).

The use of metaphor was explored by completing a series of exercises in the classroom on creative writing focussed on the use of metaphor and teacher identity. Vicky Phelan, a team member from the Literacy Development Centre (WIT), was responsible for exploring how some of these paper based activities could be enhanced by some of the new technologies. A student teacher forum was created where these metaphors could be commented upon and challenged by peer reviewed discussion. The multiple perspectives and critical questioning provoked some very significant interrogation of existing assumptions and dominant discourses in relation to teacher identity. One metaphor which was created was an anchor. This allowed for a very lively discussion on the core values that teachers were guided by in the classroom and those which were more flexible and could be renegotiated in the light of different teaching contexts.

“ I realised that it was a long time since I had thought about what is anchoring me in my work as a teacher.... respect and a sense of fair play were what I kept coming back to, for me and the students..... without it nothing makes any sense and my job is unworkable”.

Afterthoughts about the arts-based reflection process about teacher identity

It was clear that the students' initial descriptive accounts of their identity as teachers were enhanced to a much higher level of critical thinking, fuelled by questions and comments posted on the forum by their peers. The forum also created a social dimension for collective reflection, which was commented on by the teachers themselves as very helpful.

It was also clear that the arts-based approach had supported students to make useful links between theory, concepts, classroom discussions and their classroom practice. It allowed them to re-imagine and re- create their identities as teachers. It outlined some of the following areas as central to them: the need for teachers to be fluid and responsive often in opposition to the structured accountability increasingly being requested of them; the importance of being trusted and trusting themselves to make final judgement calls about their practice; also to step away from the traditional model of the teacher as someone who has to know everything and is restricted in their ability to search for answers.

Digital reflection methods

In this workshop, while Jim demonstrated online reflection tools such as diver, he also focused on more easily accessible forms of technology which can be learnt and applied quickly. These include the word cloud , wordle, which is created by typing in text on a particular theme <http://www.wordle.net/>.

Digital Stories on MovieMaker at WIT

We do not store experience as data, like a computer: we story it. Winter 1988.

Fourteen digital stories were created with MovieMaker by the participants of the Reflective Practice module. Participants were asked to story their experiences and impressions of reflective practice, their consideration of the relevance and usefulness of reflection in their practice teacher and evaluate their own ability and potential as a reflective practitioners. Drawing on the work of Bolton(2005) and Whipp (2003), these stories supported teachers not only to find their own unique voice but also to critically reflect on areas of experience that were often ignored. The issue of self assessment and Institutional assessment was of central importance to this work. However, as this group of practitioners were mainly working in mainstream education and not in the Adult Literacy sector it was considered wiser to document these aspects in a separate article.

Reflections on the workshop

As the result of a one-day workshop, students were able to use digital forms of reflection to express their ideas about their practice. Although some had limited ICT skills, they were able to use the tools present to develop these skills. This event enabled the QUB course team to identify key aspects of making MovieMaker films which might be incorporated into teacher education programmes. Participants' responses suggested that it was useful for students to reflect on separately and analyse the use of metaphor, images, text and sound in the film. These ideas provided a framework for the MovieMaker work with the QUB students who were involved in the seminar on the 21st of April.

9. Seminar on arts-based approaches to reflective practice, 21st April, 2012

This event, which was the culmination of the project, took place at the Marino Institute of Education, Dublin. It brought together 9 participants from the QUB Diploma in the Teaching and Management of Literacy and Essential Skills and 10 from the Language and Power module.

Preparation for the seminar was undertaken separately for the groups of students from QUB and the participants on the Language and Power module from WIT, as they were studying in different institutions on modules which ran on different time schedules. However, it was agreed that both groups should engage in critical reflection on popular cultural representations of literacy. It was considered that this would be a useful medium for exploring dominant discourses of literacy and how these views can be uncritically internalised by teachers and students in the sector. An exploration of how literacy is represented in popular culture became a theme to be jointly explored on April 21st by both groups.

Preparation of QUB students began in January 2012 and continued until March, during which time a five minute film was created to be developed on one of the seminar themes and presented at the seminar on 21st April. However, as WIT delivers its modules in a modularised format of two three-day residential blocks, a different format was worked out for the Language and Power block 2. Participants could only begin to work on the SCoTENS project in March, when they would meet for the first block, and then not meet again until 19th April, two days before they would meet the participants from QUB. The possibility of this group preparing a five minute film using MovieMaker on one of the seminar themes for presentation on April 21st was considered impractical. Therefore it was decided that the group should be given the chance to reflect critically on representations of literacy in popular film culture during their taught module on April 19th and 20th. The group would then be invited during this time to make a short digital story or alternatively produce some other artefact for presentation at the seminar on the 21st April.

A reading list was drawn up and the following films were prescribed as core content for both groups: Educating Rita, Sylvia, Social Network, Dangerous Minds and The Dead Poet's society.

QUB presented information about the research project and the assignment which students would have to complete, a five-minute MovieMaker film on one of the three themes (Appendix A) at their first course session in January 2012. The students were divided into three groups, each of which explored their theme and shared readings on the subject which had been uploaded to the VLE.

Students took part in a critical reflection activity, looking at four films using Moviemaker on YouTube, all on the theme of literacy, and reflecting on the design of the films, the way in which the message was conveyed, the use of image, text and sound, multimodal learning, and the overall impact of each film. The discussion then moved onto the use of film as a learning tool and on the different conceptualisations of literacy, literacy learners and literacy educators in the films. This discussion was developed in a subsequent course session in February, when the class watched and reflected on excerpts from the feature films such as Dangerous Minds which had aspects of literacy as a core theme.

The examination of films on literacy opened up awareness not only of how literacy is represented, but the political, cultural and economic factors which impact on the representation of literacy in film and on television. This enriched awareness of factors impacting on literacy is evident in the MovieMaker films created by the participants for the SCoTENS project.

In March, the students presented their films and handouts to each other. An example of a handout is included in Appendix E. Before and after showing their films, the students completed a self-assessment (see Appendix C). The purpose of this self-assessment was to encourage them to reflect on the processes of creating their films and on their impact.

WIT Preparation for 21st April Seminar

All of the participants who had already completed the first three days of the Language and Power module in the BA in Adult Education were met by Geraldine Mernagh (WIT) for an information session on the research project. They were offered the opportunity to engage in activities which would help them to gain a new perspective on what is meant by literacy and how creativity can be integrated into the classroom. The approaches which would be explored in the three day block were summarised as life story and digital story, creative writing, poetry, collage, popular cultural representations of literacy. This idea was met with great enthusiasm by the whole group but only ten of them were in a position to attend the SCOTENS block which had been re-scheduled for the 21st April.

The preparation for the joint seminar was to take place on the 19th and 20th April. The challenges were considerable. For this research project to work, this group of literacy practitioners needed to become familiar with the theory and practice of creativity, connect with their own personal meanings of their identity as teachers, learn how to play and reflect on their creative work and create an artefact which they would present to a group of practitioners in QUB whom they would meet for the first time on April 21st. In spite of the time constraint, this work needed to be paced in such a way that practitioners felt safe and relaxed as anxiety and pressure are two well-documented blocks to creativity.

The activities included an autobiographical story telling event, discussion on theories of creativity, exploration of metaphor and personal meaning, individual and group poetry sessions. Vicky Phelan (WIT) delivered a workshop on using Photostory as a way of creating a digital story. This was welcomed as a relatively simple tool for “getting away from pen and paper” within a limited time frame which suited the logistical constraints of tutors in their fluid workplaces.

The students were amazed at their own creativity. The interaction between these practitioners became energised with curiosity and enthusiasm as the group drew on digital story telling, collage making and creative writing. They became more aware

of alternative ways of knowing, and connected this emotional dimension of learning with the more familiar aspects of cognitive learning. This is the approach of the “informed heart” whereby practitioners are encouraged to combine the intellectual ways of knowing with more intuitive and affective ways in order to strengthen their agency in the classroom (Mernagh and O’Brien, 2008). The classroom is viewed as a place where the imagination can “light the slow fuse of possibility” (Emily Dickinson) and new meanings and practices can be put into place. The group were very surprised at how empowered they felt by these activities and considered how this could be transferred to their students.

As a way of integrating the two groups, Shelley Tracey from QUB joined the WIT group on April 20th, the day before the joint seminar, and conducted a session on creativity and assessment. This helped the group to examine how their own creative artefacts could be assessed. Shelley also introduced some of the creative approaches she had used with her own group and important links were made about the meanings which were attributed to creativity in literacy practice.

One of the activities which most surprised participants was poetry writing. A bag of random words was distributed among the group and they were invited to create poems in response to various prompts on an individual and finally on a group basis. The group emphasised the importance of maintaining strong boundaries and creating emotionally safe spaces for creativity to flourish.

Drawing on Balzac (2006) and Tracey’s (2007, 2009) creative processes, four important stages underpinned the creative workshops: Preparation, Play, Exploration and Synthesis. At the end of the workshop the group was divided into groups and asked to use their random words to create a group poem beginning “The Dragon is.....” At the end of this activity, students were amazed at the insights which it had opened up to them.

There was consensus by the participants in these activities on the most important themes which emerged from the arts-based reflections:

Personal Development: The activities seemed to foster empathy and social solidarity as well as reinforce the sense of our individual uniqueness and hidden potential.

“ Creativity goes to the core of who we are. Creativity reaches back to who we were our unique self, our imagination helps us to recreate who might become and it is LIMITLESS”

“I really felt connected to myself and to every on in the group in a way that I had not experienced before”

The buzz in the room was palpable: the two groups had similar words and had created two completely different dragons in the dragon poetry activity.. a negative and a positive..there was such a feeling of achievement and satisfaction:

“ I want to hold onto my wild side,perhaps it’s where I belong, It’s where I want to flourish”

On Creativity: for many it completely re- configured how they viewed it.

“This has transformed my view of creativity.

“Imagination is a word often used but not acted upon. People are not confident enough to to voice what they imagine or dream of as it may seem not normal”

“I am able to recognise the creative ability I and my students have- we all have creativity in us and I have learned that from this....(activities)”

“You must go through the creative process before you can bring it to students...so that you can understand how powerful it can be”

“There is no right or wrong when you are being creative from within”

About literacy: new meanings about their roles as tutors

“I realise that many of our learners haave been discouraged from using their imagination in their past experiences of education.(my role) is to try new approaches to work so that they can be de-programmed.”

“Tutoring is not about pouring people into a mould so that they can be popped out like ice cubes- dissolving back into the water where they originated- but about

cracking open the constraints of their beliefs and being open to learning in partnership with them”

“Literacy is about tapping into this huge potential inside us”

” “I had always been so careful about ticking the right boxes – but who is creating the boxes?”

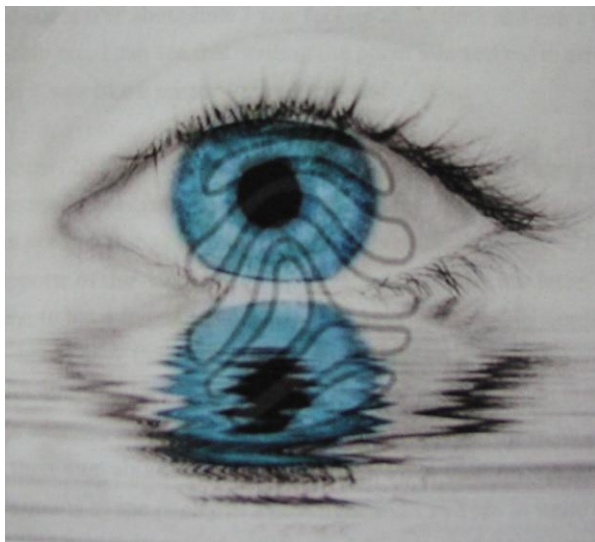
Conclusion from arts-based reflections

“it was like as if I was getting to see who I might become”

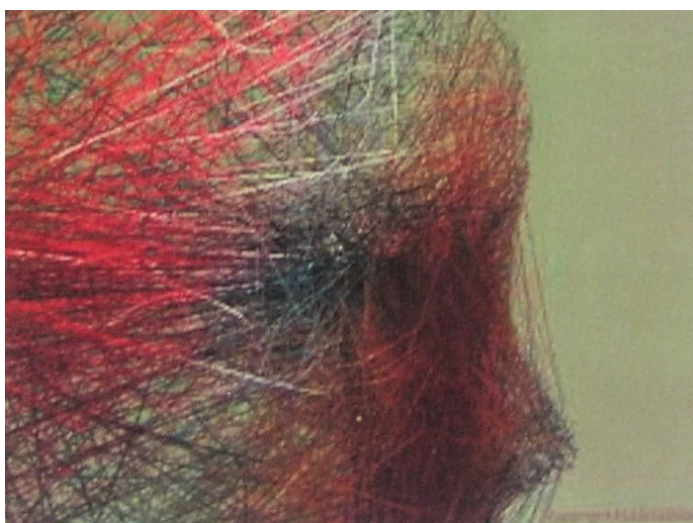
Tutors seemed to be clearer about their role as literacy tutors and the real value of literacy and their overall professional and personal identity. There was also an integration between the personal and professional and it appears that some of the alienation experienced by tutors had given way to collective and social bonding.

10. Reflections on arts-based reflective activities used as preparation for the April 21st Seminar by WIT

This image is a metaphor for the benefits of creating a visual autobiography. We could 'look into ourselves and see what shapes us and makes us what we are.



This is a metaphor for our creativity, a finely interwoven mesh of all the colourful threads of others.



The Dragon

The dragon is **circling** as he soars
Like a **hurricane** through the **twisted** couds
His **arched spine** **writhes** like a **stone** bridge
Being **swept** to new **beginnings**
As he **sucks** in the **musty** air and
Bellows out a **smoking white** cloud
He leaves a message of **Glimmer** and hope
To **inspire torrents** of **vision**
The vision includes a **rainbow** of **jewels**
Perfumed with **glitter** which **composes** a **magical creation**.

Group poem words in bold indicate the random words which the group were given to use as a basis for constructing the poem

The evidence presented so far by QUB and WIT suggests that transformative learning has significantly taken place for both groups of participants in their preparation for the April 21st Seminar. Transformative learning is understood as “the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning, perspectives, habits of mind, mind sets), to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.” (Mezirow, 2000, 7-8).

The project located the transformation as occurring not only within the individual but also in interaction with others and with the creative artefact itself. These aspects of transformation are evident in the processes and outcomes of the group work in preparation for and at the 21st April event.

11. 21st April event: activities and outcomes

The event took place as follows:

1. Students from both institutions introduced themselves to each other through an ice-breaker activity. They were divided into groups according to the themes on which they had been working and then chose images and quotations from an assortment which represented their ideas about creativity. This is an activity from the first stage of Tracey's model of creative reflection (Tracey, 2007), and offers the opportunity for participants to articulate and share their ideas about creativity, making connections between their individual conceptualisations.

Evaluations of the discussions indicate that participants found the process useful:
"It was a good way to get to know other people and find out about their practice as well"

"It showed you how subjective the whole thing is"

"It was amazing to see how many similar ideas and themes there were."

2. The students presented the films or other creative artefacts which they had prepared to each other in their themed groups. The purpose of this activity was for them to share different responses to and experiences of the themes which they had chosen and to build up a common vocabulary.

3. In the same groups, students drew their ideas together on the themes and created a joint piece, using arts-based methods of their choice. They presented this work to the group, beginning by identifying their success criteria for their work. This built on the principles for assessment for learning which are embedded in the Northern Ireland curriculum (primary and secondary), and which have been incorporated into the QUB courses for adult literacy and numeracy practitioners. These presentations were filmed and the students submitted a group self-assessment of their combined work.

Group presentations

Group 1, which focused on the theme of learning identities and writing, presented an electronic collage and a PowerPoint presentation.

Group 1: electronic collage



This collage uses a range of images to convey ideas about writing. The discussion on these images was infused with references to the transformative aspects of learning, and to the role of the tutor in scaffolding learning. These themes were developed in a second collage; the title, Journey to the Impossible, suggests the transformative power of learning.



In their presentation, the students suggested that the process of writing supports self-discovery and the development of identity. They concluded that tutors need to experience the writing process themselves before they ask their learners to engage in the process so that they can become aware of the challenges and opportunities involved. They wrote the poem in the blue circle on the poster above as a result of this conviction.

*Open your eyes to your inner self
 A mirage of knowledge upon the shelf.
 A maze of words undiscovered still
 Breaking the barriers will strengthen your will
 Journey through the unimaginable
 To the sound of your unique voice
 Making the impossible possible
 Your vision
 Your choice*

This presentation was infused with the discourse of transformation and allusions to the affective aspects of learning. An underpinning theme was the role of the tutor in supporting and inspiring learners.

The group commented that they had worked effectively together. This was borne out by the complexity of their ideas and the fluency of their presentation.

Group 2

The theme of this group's presentation was that of creative methods for teaching literacy. Exploring the importance of creativity in their practice, they suggested that "as tutors we need to be creative if we are going to overcome the problems along the way that affect our students." They produced the following piece of art:



Their presentation, which also included a PowerPoint slide show, explored the relationship between learning and the realisation of potential. The presentation was imbued with positivity. "We were all inspired by what we did this morning," one of the presenters declared. They described the process of collaboration as fruitful: "Respecting each person's input led to the whole project working." They pointed out that the idea of the rainbow emerged early in their planning: "there wasn't enough time, so we had to just go with the idea."

Working with the colours of the rainbow, the group used colour as a metaphor for the learning process, suggesting that colours reflect different emotions. "As you become more confident the colours become stronger ; the further you go on your learning journey, the more powerful you are." The image of the rainbow and the notion of possibility and growth aligned the second presentation with the first one, which also explored the ideas of transcending boundaries and transformation through learning.

Both presentations 1 and 2 focused on and emphasized the importance of affective aspects of learning, focusing on confidence and well-being. The third presentation, in contrast, focused less on the positive aspects of learning and engaged in critical reflection on the film industry, especially on Hollywood representations of literacy, with literacy learners being portrayed as deficient. One of the presenters asserted that “Literacy is dumbed down in Hollywood.” The slogan hand on the left hand side in red affirms, “Film weakens literacy.”



The words DEL and VEC refer to the government agencies in the North and South of Ireland respectively which determine literacy policies. These were referred to in the presentation in terms of the limitations they place on learning. This group theorized about the relationship between culture and identity, showing a deeper awareness of more cognitive-based reflection rather than on the affective aspects valorized by groups 1 and 2, drawing on theories of literacy, learning and social context.

12. Summary of Evaluations from 14/1/12 and 21/4/12 events

Thirty three evaluations were distributed between these two events, and twenty eight of them were completed and returned. Twenty seven participants stated that they felt the project had succeeded in extending traditional models of reflective practice to include more creative approaches to reflective practice (82%). One person was unsure, because they felt that they needed more time to process what they had learned.

Twenty nine participants also stated that the project had changed their understanding of the concept of reflective practice (88%). Four stated that it had remained the same. This response was to some extent determined by how much prior knowledge participants had about reflective practice. Also, reflection is an implicit rather than explicit component of the Language and Power module.

All thirty three participants agreed that the project had enhanced their awareness of the importance of reflective practice. The most striking realisation which was expressed was the identification of reflective practice as a key tool for improving practice. The enthusiasm which was generated for using technology to enhance reflection was expressed by all of the participants. Age or gender did not present as a barrier to embracing MovieMaker, digital storytelling, electronic collages, tagxedo, or photo story. The intensity of the collaborative event was commented upon by all of the participants:

“ I learned more than ever before”

“ I came away feeling refreshed, energised and equipped with new tools which will enhance my role as tutor and which I am looking forward to passing on to my students.”

All of the participants expressed their appreciation for the support they received from the course tutors and commented on the importance of the support.

13. Theoretical frameworks for data analysis

The thorny issue of what constitutes evidence of reflection is well-documented in the literature; the project drew on the work of Hatton and Smith, who established an operational framework for different types of reflection described as descriptive reflection, dialogic reflection and critical reflection (Hatton and Smith 1995). In this framework, dialogic reflection has to do with reflection on and with the self, with the aspects of self awareness which emerge from and build knowledge about practice.

Hubbs and Brand (2005) also created a useful matrix which helps to assess the level of engagement with the subject matter and the level of reflection, from superficial to complex. The WIT/QUB research project built on these models, developing a continuum of reflection from the descriptive to dialogic and critical reflection. The individual assignments completed for the project, especially those for the reflective practice module at WIT, indicated that students had engaged effectively in the reflective opportunities offered by the research project and were demonstrating effectiveness in dialogic and critical reflection.

For the collaborative work which was the focus of the 21st April event, the project partners developed a framework for reflection, *Creative Process Reflection*. This draws on the element of social reflection in McKenzie's PERHAPS model of (2009) which had been piloted with the participants on the Reflective Practice module in WIT. This recognised the social dimension of reflection for some teachers and extended reflection beyond a personal introspective process.

The *Creative Process Reflection* model begins with engaging students in the personal and introspective aspects of reflection, as in the Hatton and Smith and Hubbs and Brand modules, and extends this to incorporate collaborative or social reflection, reflection on process of using arts-based methods, and reflection on the artefacts created by the use of these methods. This framework was used to analyse the data which emerged from the research process, including recorded interactions between the participants, their presentations of the artefacts which they created

together, self-assessments by groups on these artefacts, and reflections on the process in individual assignments for the Language and Power module.

Collaborative/ social reflection

In their collaborative reflections, the students developed their understanding of models of creativity, their roles as adult educators, and of each others' practice. Groups identified commonalities: education policies which did not address fully the needs of learners who needed to be included; education policies which focused on de-contextualised skills at the expense of holistic models of education; the need for teachers working with marginalised groups to share their ideas and practice; how easily they as teachers could be marginalised.

The group also recognised how collaborating in creative activities seemed to create open and respectful relationships which supported dialogue at a very deep level, given that they had not known each other before they met on the 21st of April. As one declared, *"you could call it speed dating/ speed relating"*.

The trust helped people to overcome feelings of inadequacy and concentrate on what they had to offer the group discussion *"The most significant part for me was the gelling among our small group. I wasn't expecting it, but it felt great"*.

Given that ongoing professional development is dependent on participating in a community of practice, this outcome is particularly significant.

Reflection on the process of using arts-based methods

Participants presented their collaborative group project to the group and were struck by the sense of ownership which member of the group felt for the work. Given that there was a very tight time frame within which to complete this project, each of the groups commented on how surprised they were to have arrived at some form of workable common ground. Given that "very strong feelings and differences of opinion" existed between group members, participants commented on how the

creative process seemed to be particularly helpful for building respect for difference while moving towards consensus. All but one participant felt that the process had supported inclusivity. Lateral thinking and consciously searching for other perspectives seemed to disrupt the stagnant power struggles that can undermine group work.

Reflection on creative artefacts

Each of the groups presented a self-assessment of their work, along with a mark for their piece. This was the least successful part of the project in terms of outcomes. However, it provided a very useful source of reflection. The difficulties of asking students to participate in a self assessment exercise began to emerge. The exercise focuses on the personal development and personal fulfilment aspect of learning or learning for its own sake. However, it does not recognise that this self assessment exercise is taking place within the context of accreditation where students are also motivated to achieve good grades. An initial reflection suggests that there is a dilemma for students being invited to suggest why they should give themselves a low mark.

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14. Outcomes of the project

Creative artefacts

Participants created a number of artefacts through their engagement in the project: 10 learning journals, 10 reflections on artefacts with QUB, 3 digital stories, 3 electronic collages, a PowerPoint slide show, 2 paper collages, and 15 MovieMaker films and handouts on multimodal learning. The electronic artefacts were stored on an online blog created by Vicky Phelan of WIT. The existence of this blog means that they can be shared on future occasions.

Digital tools for reflection

The project introduced participants to simple digital tools for reflection, such as Wordle, tagxedo and Windows MovieMaker. It showed how accessible and free technologies can be used creatively to reflect on practice and to develop broader conceptualisations of the role of literacy and of the tutor's role.

It also suggests that in both initial teacher education and CPD, teachers need opportunities to experiment with technology so that they can understand the full applications for their practice

Windows MovieMaker and Photostory are free tools which can be easily downloaded from the internet, They are simple to use and have potential as useful tools for teaching and learning. Their potential is three fold: as tools for developing visual literacy, for enhancing awareness of the affordances of image, text, and sound, and as tools for reflecting on practice.

Participant evaluations of the processes of using MovieMaker suggest that they found it an effective medium for expressing their ideas. In addition, watching MovieMaker films created by their peers engaged and inspired them, and enhanced their awareness of the broader issues to do with literacy, such as the representation of literacy in popular culture.

However, there are drawbacks to using Windows Moviemaker: as the Diploma in Literacy students pointed out, it takes a good deal of time to create a film using this medium. Nevertheless, some students intimated that they were very proud of their films, and that they would use them in their practice. A further issue with Moviemaker is that some versions are more user-friendly than others.

Participant evaluations of the Photostory workshop delivered by Vicky Phelan suggested that using Photostory considerably enlarged their understanding of what we mean by literacy and how we can use it to enrich our lives. Tutors particularly enjoyed the possibility of using voice as a narrative for reflection. For some tutors, talking through their reflections as a voice-over felt like a more natural medium than using the written word.

The fact that Photostory was relatively simple to use, meant that tutors could see how they could use it even within the tight constraints of their workplace. Vicky Phelan as lecturer in new technologies introduced the tutors to a wide range of images and photo databases which made a significant contribution to how they would teach visual literacy. These were very useful when it came to creating electronic collages.

Tutors who are not very familiar with technology were aware that high levels of one-to-one lecturer support were needed for this activity and appreciated the amount of assistance available.

Creative Writing

While participants taught creative writing occasionally in their literacy classes, most of them acknowledged that they did not engage with it themselves. All of them commented on the importance of experiencing the creative process yourself, before you could bring it to your students.

Participants were excited by the discovery that “ we are all creative” and that creative writing “happens best when we stop trying to control our stories but instead let the free mind dream in a safe place”.

The ability of writing to connect the heart and the head was a very powerful discovery for some students. They were keen to bring Heaney’s concept of writing as voice to their learners.

Finding a voice means that you can get your own feeling into your own words and that your words have the feel of you about them... (Heaney 1980)

This encapsulated what many tutors felt was an often neglected dimension to literacy.

The project had a further practical outcome, in that the participants decided to create a Facebook group so that they could keep in touch with each other and share good practice in literacy teaching, as well as their interest in arts-based methods for teaching and learning.

Reflection

The project was based on notions of knowledge as socially constructed, and thus incorporated collaborative as well as individual reflection. It also raises a further set of questions about assessing reflection, to do with the differences between individual and group reflections, and whether these differences mean that they cannot be assessed in the same manner. The project made significant issues in relation to assessing aesthetic work, which were beyond the scope of the project. This is an area for further research.

Collaboration between institutions

There were unanticipated outcomes which were about the learning which ensues from inter-institutional collaboration. The two principal investigators, Shelley Tracey

and Geraldine Mernagh, worked closely together on all aspects of the project, planning and co-facilitating, and gathering and analysing the research data. This was an intensive and time-consuming process, but extremely rewarding. We worked from a shared value base, and a shared understanding of teaching as an art; we drew on our own creative experiences and identities to understand the process that we would be requiring students to undergo. We acted as critical friends, deepened through discussion our existing understandings of creativity and literacy and enacted shared values of partnership, in particular those of respect, openness and generosity.

15. Benefits of the project

The project offered a number of benefits for teacher education on the island of Ireland:

- it brought together practitioners in the field of adult education to enable them to consolidate what they understood about their community of practice and develop appropriate frameworks to support their practice.
- the development of alternative methods of reflection which practitioners might apply in their practice for engaging both traditional and non-traditional learners.
- opportunities for practitioners and teacher educators to develop their professional identities as reflective practitioners and challenge the idea of teachers as mere technicians in the classroom
- the development of innovative assessment practices, which provided both institutions with access to a wider variety of assessment tools
- the development of online reflection tools which support blended and distance learning opportunities
- a re-examination of what is meant by creativity and what it contributes to the national and International discussions which are taking place about literacy and how it is measured and valued.
- it reaffirmed the importance of the affective as well as the cognitive dimension of learning.

16. Dissemination of findings

As this research project was located within the practice of the two institutions, there was no separate dissemination event beyond these institutions. However, some of the outcomes have been stored on a website and can be disseminated very easily. It is hoped that a specific dissemination event will be possible at a later stage.

It appears from participants' responses that they are applying their learning from the project to their practice. 12 of the 14 participants from the Reflective Practice module on the Masters in Arts programme who returned their questionnaire said that they are using their learning about reflective practice in the classroom as a result of the module. As teaching was coming to an end for the participants of the joint seminar, application in the classroom can only be tracked in the coming academic year.

The lead investigators from QUB and WIT are currently writing a paper on the project for a special edition of the Canadian journal, *LEARNING Landscapes*, on creativity in education.

17. Conclusions

This research project explored arts-based reflection in the context of teacher education for adult education practitioners; however, these outcomes have potential for teacher education in all sectors.

Using arts-based methods requires an environment in which participants feel comfortable about engaging in the unpredictable processes of creativity. They also need opportunities to play with ideas and different forms of expression.

This project was a positive learning experience for the QUB and WIT teams and for their respective students, who learnt from each other about pedagogy, using arts-based methods for reflection, and the different contexts for teaching and learning in the North and South of Ireland. The students' learners are also potential beneficiaries of this project: the impact of participating in the project on their tutors means that they would be more aware of the possibilities of creative approaches for including learners who might not respond to traditional methods of experience, following previous negative experiences of education.

This project also raises the importance of incorporating visual literacy into literacy programmes in particular, and into teacher education in general, given the prevalence of images in modern society and the technologies which allow learners to capture, create and manipulate them. This project drew on a range of ideas about visual literacy, to include not only the ability to "read" images but also to create them and to reflect on the processes and outcomes of image-making. (Elkins 2002, Rose, 2001, Griffin, 2008, Metros and Woolsey, 2006, Natharius, 2004). The project also built on Kress's notion that images and text have different affordances (2003), believing that for adult literacy teachers to have a broad notion of literacy as different modes of communication and an understanding about each of these modes.

The collaboration between the project partners, Shelley Tracey and Geraldine Mernagh, allowed us to share practice and understanding of reflection and creativity through offering a space for us to articulate and debate our ideas and create collaborative frameworks, such as the *Creative Process Reflection* model. This model was one of the key outcomes of the project; it accounted for collaborative as well as individual reflection, and for engagement with the processes of creativity in developing arts- and technology-based artefacts of reflection.

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APPENDIX A: QUB ASSIGNMENT BRIEF

REFLECTIVE LEARNING PROJECT

As this course is based on the notion that reflection is a complex process and that there are multiple forms of reflection, you are encouraged to use a range of different forms of reflection in completing this assignment, choosing from this list (if you would like to use any other forms of reflection which do not appear on this list, please consult your tutor):

- usual format of written reflective learning journal entry (essay)
- creative writing
- blogging
- use of images (still/moving) with an accompanying rationale
- sound files
- combinations of images and text
- You should choose **one** of these themes:
 - 1. Using creative methods for learning and teaching literacy
 - 2. Using writing to enhance learner voice and learning identities
 - 3. Popular culture and representations of literacy (film and TV) Iris, The Reader, Dead Poets' Society

There are two parts to this assignment:

1. Individual presentation: a Moviemaker film (5 minutes) on one of the themes
- A handout, no more than 4 A4 pages, about the theme, with references (50%)

Part 2. Your work will be presented in Dublin on the 21st of April to peers who have chosen the same theme. You will combine your work and create a group presentation, using creative methods. This will be assessed through self-assessment and tutor assessment (50%)

In Dublin, you will be required to plan a group response to this theme, referring to the literature that will be uploaded on Queen's Online and any other research which you might undertake. While you may give a PowerPoint presentation, you are encouraged to use active and creative methods for presenting this work, for example, storytelling, role play, or art work.

APPENDIX B: WIT ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment One

Learning Moment

Visual Reflective Journal - Extending the limits of Language through Metaphor

“Look -can you always express just what you want to express in your journal? Does everything go into nice tidy words? Aren't you constantly driven to metaphor?.....I suddenly had a memory of how difficult it was to describe the feeling I had on Mid-summer Eve, and how I wrote of the day (using a metaphor) that it was like a cathedral like avenue. Yet I could never explain how the image and the reality merge and how they somehow extend and beautify each other.

“I Capture The Castle”, Dodie Smith

This journal will allow you to describe and reflect on **two** particular ideas or activities over the course of the delivery of the second part of this module that struck you as particularly useful.

You are asked to **(a) discuss** this idea with reference to the relevant theorist (s) **(b) reflect** on the relevance of this idea to you as a person, a learner a teacher **(c) create** images (2 per idea) which captures what you are trying to express about this particular piece of learning and discuss how this image anchors or elaborates on your learning **(d) Comment** on how this idea will influence some future action in your professional practice.

Geraldine Mernagh

WIT Assignment 2

Theory 50%

Give a brief account of the ideas of at least two theorists of reflective practice drawing attention to how they are similar and how they are different.

Practice

Explain how these ideas are relevant and of use to you in your work

1250 words + or – 10%

Or

Overview 50%

Create a **multi media event** describing and reflecting on how your ideas about reflective practice in general have developed over the course of the delivery of the module and afterwards.

Some possible aspects which could be drawn from your class Journal could be:

- Your expectations for the module
- Your experience or knowledge of reflective practice in the past
- Your impression of the process of learning about reflective practice including activities and discussions
- Your consideration of the relevance and usefulness to your activities as teacher and a learner
- Your evaluation of your own ability and potential as a reflective practitioner.

Submission date five weeks after the last module 2013

Submission Date May 1st 2012

Language and Power Block 2

Assignment 2

Critical Reflection on the creation of a creative artefact in partnership with QUB on Saturday 21st April (1000 words)

Rationale

(a) What was the artefact you created with your group and what were you hoping to achieve: identify the criteria you would use to judge whether you succeeded in achieving what you hoped to achieve.

(b) Please indicate how your participation in creating this artefact was underpinned by the ideas we discussed on the module for the two previous day. You might like to include to what extent your participation in the two teaching days supported your participation in this event creatively, emotionally and intellectually

The process

(c) Can you critically reflect on the process of working with your group. Perhaps you could reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of collaborative learning.

The outcomes

(d) What did your presence in this seminar contribute to your understanding of creativity

(e) What was the value of working with practitioners from another setting

(f) Any other outcomes you would like to comment on.

Geraldine Mernagh May 8th 2012

Please submit this to Literacy Development Centre May 21st 2012

APPENDIX C: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF QUB MOVIE-MAKER FILMS

The self-assessment form appears below, with illustrative responses, and reflections on these after each section.

DIPLOMA IN THE TEACHING AND MANAGEMENT OF LITERACY AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS

ASSIGNMENT 4 SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. FILM

Your success criteria for your film	Comments	Self-assessment after showing your film
1. The design of the film	<p>A. I thought the design of the film flowed quite well in that my thoughts translated quite well to the actual film.</p> <p>B. I hoped the movie would provide a historical perspective on social change and cultural identity</p>	<p>A. Even after the film I feel that the design of the film translated to the viewing</p> <p>B: Maybe a couple of the slides could have been quicker. Moving images would also have been a good addition.</p>
2. The use of music and/or narration	<p>A: The music was the most enjoyable part; however, I could not add the amount of tracks I would have wished</p> <p>B: The music I chose was for impact</p> <p>C: The music was the first thing I selected – with help from my learners – it was pivotal to the movie and contains the main message.</p>	<p>A: I feel the music was appropriate.</p> <p>B: Peers liked the music choice. Film clip very appropriate.</p> <p>C: Music complemented the theme and gave it depth.</p>
3. The use of text	<p>A: I have relied heavily on the handout to explain the film. I have placed appropriate text captions in the film to enforce the message.</p>	<p>A: I felt the text carried the message of the film</p>

	<p>B: Used text interspersed with images in separate slides.</p> <p>C: Kept to a minimum. Used MovieMaker effects to create interest. Focused on text being to the point.</p>	<p>B: Should have tried to put text on the images rather than on separate slides – would have been more powerful.</p> <p>C: Quotes were effective.</p>
<p>4. The use of images</p>	<p>A: I found that using a historical timeline in parallel with the topic helped me in my search for images</p> <p>B: This was key! I worked countless hours to make sure that the images were poignant and struck a chord.</p>	<p>A: A few selected images could have been better quality</p> <p>B: I was happy with the images and feedback seemed to be positive overall. ‘Professional’ was used in my feedback, which I was happy with!</p>
<p>Any other comments</p>	<p>I think the film worked well and answered the question.</p>	<p>Good film.</p>

Any other comments:

Frustrating, had to learn a lot of new skills – both technical and how to stretch myself to new levels of patience.

Really enjoyed watching my peers’ films – the variety and personal interpretations of the same theme. A lot of powerful images used, and superb connectivity between images and music. Well done everyone!

Reflections

These comments on the making of the film reveal some of the thought processes that went into the planning, and suggest that the session on analysing Windows MovieMaker films on YouTube supported the students’ awareness of the different modes involved in film. The

comments also suggest the limitations of the medium, as well as the skills that the students developed in making their films, and their frustrations.

The students' perceptions of their films were mediated by their peers' responses and the self-assessment process. This suggests the importance of making specific spaces for self- and other forms of assessment, as well as the contribution which reflection makes to the assessment process.

In the discussion after students had completed their self-assessments, they related their experiences of designing their films and handouts for an audience of their peers and learners to the processes of drafting writing for a specific audience, which is a key element in the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum which they use in their practice. Engaging in the activity of making and reflecting on the films appears to have opened up students' awareness of the multimodal aspects of literacy.

2. HANDOUT

CRITERIA	SELF-ASSESSMENT
Comprehensive response to the theme	Sourced a lot of reading material online and read about the theme. I did a lot of reading around the theme.
Appropriate references; broad range	Handout was written in an essay style. It would have been better to include images and shorter punchier paragraphs. I feel a sense of achievement from the handout as much as the film
Aesthetic aspects: design, layout	Design and layout effective. Used colour/ font Arial
The needs of the audience (peers)	Supported my film and explained my thoughts
Presentation: appropriate and correct use of language ; referencing	Correct reference to book and journal and film clip
Any other comments	
2. Please state the mark you think you should receive for this assignment, giving your reasons	

An A would be nice – based on time spent in preparation for this assignment and the work in linking sound and image

Self –assessment is something i find difficult as there were many great films in comparison. I would gratefully accept an A.

3. Any other comments on the assignment?

If truth be told, I enjoyed my topic, the research and producing the film. I do have to make the point that it was very time-consuming and took me weeks to finalise. The skills I have gained from this assignment will be easily carried over and incorporated into my teaching after May [end of the course].

I had to get organisational permission, then draft a letter to the learners and their parents. I had to ensure all permission slips were back before commencing the project. Then I began taking pictures of the learners at work and including them in the “thinking process”. All work on display is authentic.

This was ground-breaking for me as I had never designed something like this before. The end result was great for me. I panicked at the start of the assignment and the rationale was a worry but I am delighted with the outcome.

Appendix D: ASSESSMENT OF GROUP PRESENTATIONS (please hand in one completed form per group)

GROUP:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

<p>1. Self-assessment What do you hope to achieve? What criteria did you use?</p> <p><i>Suggestions::</i> Comprehensive response to the theme Appropriate use of research Group planning process Aesthetic aspects: design, layout, techniques, impact The needs of the audience Response to challenges</p>	
<p>2. Presentation</p> <p>Organisation Delivery</p>	
<p>3. Reflections</p> <p>How did it all go? What mark do you think you deserve, based on your criteria and the response of the audience?</p>	
<p>4. Other comments</p>	

APPENDIX E

QUB Assignment 4: Moviemaker handout

Student A

Using Writing to Enhance Learner Voice and Learning Identities

Writing stimulates and facilitates the motor and sensory regions of the brain, and can help us recover additional fragments of former experiences.

Half-known aspects of our selves can be accessed through the metaphors we use in our writing as we 'reach intuitively into some part of ourselves that is outside our notice – still unnamed but there'. (Penn 2001. pg45)

This piece of text echoes something I have felt for a long time. Personally I can recognise how writing can unleash inner feelings and help define your position in the world and where you want to be, either for yourself or for someone else. It is something everyone can create, something fresh, original and unique to you, whether it is a note, letter, email, text, essay or novel.

Definition:

cre-a-tiv-i-ty

noun

1.

the state or quality of being creative.

2.

the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, and create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination: *the need for creativity in modern industry; creativity in the performing arts.*

(www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/creativity)

Is this a comprehensive definition of creativity?

My intention for this video was to illustrate the potential of creative writing within the learning environment. I focus primarily on popular culture, music, song writing and poetry that might engage and inspire my learners in particular.

The purpose of my film is to portray the power of writing; how it enriches, enhances and shapes emotions and identities in a way no other form of communication can.

Writing allows time for contemplation. People can illustrate emotion with words.

Why do we write letters? Or why did we write letters!

Emails, social networking sites and blogging have become the dominant form of written social interaction.

Whilst researching the benefits of blogging, social networking and web documenting I came across some striking points in relation to learning development.

Peer feedback is supported by many theoretical frameworks, such as process writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), collaborative learning theory, Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (Hansen & Liu, 2005), and social scaffolding in collaborative dialogues (Donato, 2000; Swain, 2000). Thanks to its social implications, peer feedback allows students to interact with peers by providing comments on others' writing, engendering a social space for communication and discussion. With the advancement of computer-assisted language learning, the integration of peer feedback and Wiki technology into English writing courses has become an innovative means of integrating teaching and learning tools in classrooms for writers of English as a second language. (<https://learning.qol.qub.ac.uk/2111/EDU/3018-SPR-QUB/Resources/assignment%204/wikitechenglishclasses.pdf>)

My video aims to visually refer to writers who inspire with words of sorrow, joy, longing, lust, temptation, desire. In terms of creativity, artists can only aspire to speak the words they can write. The written word is something personal, private, influential and powerful.

The "writing process" approach to teaching writing (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986) encourages the emergence of a written form of student voice: student writers' expression of ideas that matter to them, and their use of language and style that convey their engagement. Writing process classrooms are likely to feature a degree of decentralized control, as student writers make a range of "ownership decisions" (Rosen, 1993) - choosing topics, purpose, forms, audience, and time frames for completion - and provide input to one another. (<http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-4/voice.htm>)

This approach or "process" is something that could be incorporated into Individual Learning Plans, designed specifically for the student, on his or her own terms. Within this structure could we apply more enticing writing exercises that focus on the creative aspects of the learners' personalities?

Elbow (1994) states that as teachers we should allow learners 5 minutes at the end of class to write about what they learned that day. What they thought the main objective was and what they personally thought of the class. Not only would this help them integrate and internalize course material; it also helps the teachers teaching by showing them what's getting through and what isn't.

Freedom speeches and words of liberation hold heavy opinion though the constraints of time and this was something I hoped to address this within the film. Persuasive text can be taught, technique and feeling can be emphasised to empower the learner against the pressure of society.

Free writing could encourage learners to develop their ideas. Writing free from the shackles of restraint in itself is a form of rebellion. Writing can be cathartic.

Automatic writing, which is defined as different to free writing, stirs images of mindlessness and wizardry. I wanted to incorporate this as some kind of 'speaking' or rather 'writing in tongues illustration'. I never found an appropriate image.

Writing Reveals (An Ode to Writing)

You can keep it to yourself
You can share it with the world
Something stained on paper
Wrapped in wooden blankets
Aligned alphabetically
Ordered around
Beautifully bound
The written word
Lives on pen drives
On hard drives
On eBooks
Or hidden nooks
Or ALIVE
Online, evolving, always changing
With swagger and attitude

You can uncover and discover
Hidden meaning
Buried beneath confines
Barriers in your brain
Written word remains
Like photographs or stubborn stains

Or epitaphs as long as paragraphs
Doors that open wide
Words that free your mind
Bring on the belly laughs
The pump breaks with heartaches
Diagrams of diaries
Just intimate enquiries
Etched within a soul

You can give it to the world
Or share it with no-one
You declare more in written word
Sometimes unsure where it comes from
Some might say it's a different language
Than the other spoken one