

of reading comprehension, this means that adults *across all levels* can analyze, summarize, and synthesize text information and make inferences. In terms of decoding skills, the findings indicated that adults *across all levels* relied primarily upon either meaning-based strategies or an integrated use of meaning- and print-based strategies as they read. The findings also indicated that *within levels*, there are significant differences in reading strategies among adults. For example, while some students relied on meaning-based strategies to decode words, others used a combination of meaning- and print-based strategies.

These findings have implications for curriculum developers and instructors. The fact that there were few differences in reading strategies used by adults across different levels of reading proficiency implies the need for a spiral rather than sequential curriculum. The assumption underlying a spiral approach is that reading is NOT a developmental process in which adults need to learn “lower level” skills and strategies before they can develop “higher level” skills and strategies. In a spiral approach, processes, skills, and concepts are revisited and developed to new levels of complexity and the text becomes increasingly more difficult as adults progress through literacy levels. The fact that there were significant differences in reading strategies *within* levels implies the need for diagnostic assessment and instruction.

This article has touched upon a few points from the publication *Teaching Reading to Adults: A Balanced Approach*. This book raises questions about the teaching of reading to adults and serves as a catalyst to question and reflect upon your practice.

References

- Campbell, P (2003). *Teaching reading to adults: A balanced approach*. Edmonton, AB: Grass Roots Press.
- Campbell, P. & Malicky, G. (2002). The reading strategies of adult basic education students. *Adult Basic Education: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Adult Literacy Educators*, 12(1), 3-19.

Newfoundland Research-in-Practice Institute

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THE ICEBERGS, FIDDLE MUSIC AND WARM HOSPITALITY of St. John's set the stage for great learning. About seventy literacy practitioners from across Canada met between June 18 and 21 to share experience and learn more about research in practice. The Research-in-Practice Institute was held at Memorial University, organized by Helen Woodrow with a community-based team including the Brother Murphy Centre with primary funding from the National Literacy Secretariat. Participants included people learning about research in practice for the first time to those who had been doing it for many years.

This was the third annual research in practice conference, the initial one having taken place at the Learning Centre in Edmonton in 2001 and the second at the University of British Columbia in 2002. The institute also gave an opportunity to launch the new Canadian journal *Literacies — researching practice and practising research*, which is a place for people to learn from each other and talk about research, practice and research in practice. Research in practice is literacy research conducted by or with people directly engaged in adult literacy teaching and learning. It is an exciting way for us as practitioners to reflect on our work, develop our practice, and contribute to the direction of literacy work.

Courses

This conference was uniquely organized around four courses, that met each morning throughout the conference. *Researching Literacy Practices*, with Mary Hamilton from Lancaster, England, gave participants an opportunity to do a case-study on a literacy setting and event using a social practice approach. *Feminist Approaches to Research in Practice*, with Jenny Horsman from Toronto, demystified feminist

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and poststructural approaches to research, with participants learning about research approaches which make it possible to question the taken for granted and to see the ordinary in new ways. *Getting Started on Research in Practice*, with Marina Niks from Vancouver, explored such questions as: What is research? How do literacy workers and teachers conduct research in their daily practice? What research topics are practitioners investigating? *Arts-Based Research*, with Joe Norris from Washington, was about what the arts have to offer literacy research in terms of opening our thinking and how they can help in collecting, analyzing and disseminating data.

Workshops

In the afternoon there was an array of workshops, on such diverse topics as: Student Participation in the Research Process, Reading Policy, What Makes Literacy /ABE Instructors Effective in Their Practice? and The Myth of Objectivity in Research – Whose Knowledge Is It? The variety of methods and approaches pointed to the range of things which can be research in practice — from journaling to case studies to ethnographies to quantitative research.



Useful Websites:

- RiPAL (Research in Practice in Adult Literacy) – www.nald.ca/ripal
- RaPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacy) www.literacy.lanc.ac.uk/rapal/rapal.htm
- Jenny Horsman's research and practice www.jennyhorsman.com
- Research in practice at the Ontario Institute for the Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, www.literaciesOISE.ca
- Literacies journal, <http://www.literacyjournal.ca>

AlphaPlus is in the process of launching a research portal. It is still being worked on in conjunction with the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD). Please access the test version at <http://research.alphaplus.ca> and for further information contact Maria Moriarty at mmoriarty@alphaplus.ca.

Emerging Themes

Some of the themes which emerged are the way researchers need to examine their own values and biases, the practicalities of getting universities and literacy programs to work together, and the supports and paid time that practitioners need in order to do research. Elsa Auerbach, from the University of Massachusetts, asks the question: How do we integrate being literacy researchers with being literacy teachers in such a way that it leads to action?

Great Ontario Sharing

There were over fifteen participants from Ontario, from Apsley, Beamsville, Brantford, Midland, Nepean, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, and Toronto. We met as a group twice and discussed our Ontario situation and how we can best support each other. We talked about how we can work together across the four literacy streams. A number of the members of the Ontario group had raised concerns about who was missing from the conference and we discussed the need for future conferences and events to be fully inclusive of practitioners from the Francophone, Aboriginal, and Deaf literacy communities, as well as other communities.

As a participant in this inspiring event, I want to invite us all to be part of the momentum of practitioners turning to research, reading it, thinking about what it means for our programs and doing it ourselves. This is one important way that we can influence the direction of the field and build the future of adult literacy in Ontario.