

What is education for? Transformation, empowerment or "employability"?

Adult literacy — an educational case study

- 1970s and '80s influenced by Paulo Freire ideas of literacy for political empowerment and Carl Rogers' ideas about student-centred and holistic learning
- 1990s the new Labour government commissioned the Moser Report — which outlined "functional literacy and illiteracy" and linked literacy to the economy
- Deborah Brandt notes how the value of literacy, and ideas about standards in literacy, have changed radically over one century
- 2000 — "employability discourse"

Employability and the curriculum

- Literacy and ESOL learners "mandated" to attend classes — learning linked to receiving benefits
- Higher Education (or certain corners of HE) start to try and make employability a mandatory part of degrees

Employability and social class

- How to get a job in the City — a University of Greenwich study (2010)
- Choices in adult and community education (urban poor or leafy suburbs?)
- What about cultural and social capital (Bourdieu)?!

Paulo Freire

In the 'banking' concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry... (Freire 1996:53)

The educated individual is the adapted person, because she or he is better 'fit' for the world. Translated into practice, this concept is well suited to the purposes of the oppressors, whose tranquillity rests on how well people fit the world the oppressors have created, and how little they question it. (Freire 1996:57)

Carl Rogers

- Person-centred education
- Teachers as facilitators of learning
- A negotiated curriculum — and freedom to learn

Reading

Brandt, D. (2001) *Literacy in American Lives* Cambridge. CUP

Freire, P. (1996) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed New Revised Edition* London: Penguin Books

Rogers, C. (1994) *Freedom to Learn 3rd Edition* New York: Macmillan Publishing