

Title:	<i>Bridging the Gap: the personal within the policy implementation of the National Literacy Strategy</i>
Abstract: (Your abstract must not exceed 1000 words including the title and references and must fit in this space. Please use 10pt Arial font). POSTERS Your abstract must not exceed 600 words including the title and references. Please use 10pt Arial font).	<p>Jo Barkham University of the West of England, Frenchay, Bristol BS16 1QY Jo.Barkham@uwe.ac.uk</p> <p>In 1997, a New Labour government swept into power promising to prioritise <i>Education, Education, Education</i>. Speaking to delegates of the National Association of Head Teachers in June of 1999, the Prime Minister claimed Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are the two most critical educational policies of this Parliament... whose objective is nothing less that the abolition of poor reading, writing and maths skills among the generation of tomorrow.</p> <p>This paper presents an analysis of part of a policy trajectory of the National Literacy Strategy which at the heart research project undertaken as a part-time study for the award of PhD. The focus of this enquiry is located with those at the meso level between the macro (national policy) and micro (school) level.</p> <p>This paper focuses on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the members of 'the bridge' mediate and (re)interpret policy into specific contexts? • How are their professional identities changed by their role? <p>Literature</p> <p>There is extensive literature around the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy itself, including three major studies produced by the 'critical friends' of the strategy, Earl <i>et al</i> (2003). English <i>et al</i> (2002) and Fisher (2002) examined the effect on class practice. Literature on school improvement gives insight into the policy 'levers' (eg. Scheerens, 1992), whilst policymakers' thinking when the NLS rolled out nationally is provided by Reynolds (1998). Fullan (2000) sets the strategy within a global set of agendas for educational reform. In 1997, Michael Barber's publication '<i>The Learning Game</i>' was influential and Barber worked closely with the first director of the NLS: John Stannard. More recently Stannard and Huxford (2007) have recalled Barber's influence by naming their book about the NLS '<i>The Literacy Game</i>'.</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>In acknowledging that policy is not only text, but also process and discourse (Ball, 1994), this paper analyses semi-structured interview data collected from three sets of participants whose job titles were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'regional director', working to implement national policy in local authorities (two participants); • 'literacy consultant' working at local authority level with schools (seven participants from three different local authorities); • 'literacy co-ordinator' - a primary teacher with leadership responsibility for literacy within their school (two participants from two different local authorities) <p>Transcripts were analysed using 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (Fairclough, 1995) and the words examined for the presence and absence of significant elements. Situational maps (Clarke, 2005) were also used as part of the analytical approach. These maps locate the significant elements, whether people or other, including those silenced or ignored, in participants' situations. I turn mainly to Foucault (1977) for further explanation.</p> <p>Analysis and findings</p> <p>Two Regional Directors came to relish their power over local authorities, holding them to account as children's attainment is made visible through Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs). As Graham and Neu (2004) argue, such a system of testing also functions as a 'mode of government control by helping to construct governable subjects'(p.295). The authors remind us that Foucault uses the term 'governmentality', to explain how a modern government operates.</p> <p>Unquestioning of the need for prescription in the early stages of the strategy, these directors commend themselves for their silence where they have reservations. They model compliance. One aspect of their work is with literacy consultants, with whom they meet regularly for training and briefing in national messages.</p> <p>Seven Literacy Consultants gave an account of their work with 'schools' – a generic term usually indicating teachers and school leaders. They give two accounts of working to raise standards. One is when 'delivering' training, a verb of significance in the data, to a passive audience. More effective, in the consultants' view, is the work they do within schools – 'alongside' a teacher, working 'with' a teacher, negotiating and mediating strategy messages.</p> <p>Two Literacy Co-ordinators who have worked with literacy consultants extensively reported how they have</p>

been supported by a 'real' person as opposed to the depersonalised documentation or decontextualised training. Through working with consultants, co-ordinators move from using a language of fear to confidence in their capacity for self- surveillance.

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