**What does the further and adult education sector do and why does it matter?**

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**Chapter Map**

**Key words:** FE, Further Education, Adult Education, History of Adult Education, History of FE, Purpose of Adult Education, Purpose of FE

## 1.1 Introduction

Jacques Derrida once wrote that we cannot give a summary of who we are because, 'lived experience is immediately self-present' (Derrida, 1991, p.18). Equally, we cannot give a single definition of the 'diverse, rich and... fast changing landscape' (Duckworth, 2014, p.41) of adult and further education. It is complex, changing, and operates not within an insulated vacuum but in an environment that is currently influenced by an agenda of competition, marketisation and instability (see Keep, 2013, 2018). While there is no single definition through a history of adult and further education this chapter gives a picture of what these sectors are today, what they have been in the past and through these draw some commonalities about their purposes. The chapter works towards the conclusion that adult and further education matters because it brings the benefits of education including a greater sense of humanness and well-being to local communities in an inclusive and accessible manner.

## 1.2 A History of Further and Adult Education

### i Adult Education

**Key Questions**

- When did formal adult education begin?
- Why did formal adult education begin?
- In the 19th and 20th centuries what were the options for adult education?
- To what extent do these original means of adult education survive today?

**Key Theory**

This history of the adult and further education sectors comes from a range of sources as it emerged from industry, individuals, charities and churches. Among the main texts used in this section are:
Kelly, T. (1992) A History of Adult Education in Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press
Evans, D. (2007) The History of Technical Education: A Short Introduction. 2nd Edition. Cambridge: T Magazine Ltd

Adults have been formally educated in universities since the 9th Century's University of Karaouine in Morocco opened its doors (UNESCO, n.d) and in the UK at Oxford from the 11th Century onwards. For most of its history, university education has been for adults with social and economic status. For the rest, informal education for adults has always been with us as relatives, friends and others in communities passed skills on to the next generation (see Wardle, 1977). Since the Middle Ages there was a more formalised system of apprenticeships into a craft or trade via guilds (associations who controlled the businesses of the day - see Epstein, 1991) with churches providing other spaces for education with spiritual and moral aims. Another motivating force for providing adult education came from the scientific Enlightenment (Allan, 2015) with evening classes, firstly in Scotland in 1799 run by George Birkbeck who was Professor of Philosophy at Glasgow's Anderson Institute. He went on to help formalise these in a Mechanics' Institute which then formed in other cities such as Leicester by 1833 and

Nottingham in 1837 giving ‘education in the broadest possible sense, from basic instruction in literacy and numeracy to lectures on the latest scientific ideas’ (Barton, 1993, p.47).

The London Mechanics’ Institute inspired one of its graduates, William Lovett to help form the National Union of Working Classes in 1831 (see Kelly, 1970) aimed at educating those on the lower strata of society, the study of science and the improvement of the mind, body and spirit. Simultaneously, companies such as The East India Trading Company in 1804 were training in economics (see Wagner, Wittrock and Whitley, 2007) to improve their employees’ business acumen. There were also entrepreneurs who had a religious, moral or industrial purpose to setting up education for the workers in the 19th Century. In Birmingham, for example, members of the Cadbury family both taught adult education classes and created a centre for learning (which is still in operation today - see Woodbrooke, 2018). In London, Toynbee Hall (see Briggs and Macartney, 1984) was set up in the East End of London bringing Oxbridge undergraduates to teach and support the working class (it is still providing adult education - see Toynbee, 2018). Furthermore, out of this building came the Workers Education Association (WEA) dedicated to the teaching of working class adults and who continue to provide education for 50,397 adults on 8,082 courses with 3,000+ teaching volunteers (WEA, 2017).

While such key figures and organisations influenced Adult Education, the pathway has also been formed by a wider range of factors not least the creation of a ‘working class’ (see Thompson, 2009) which could be educated and a middle class who, ‘became increasingly conscious of the gap between themselves and the laboring classes’ (Rowe, 1967, p.1). Also, much as today when the UK is supposedly running in a ‘global race’ (DBIS, 2014) against other countries, international pressure helped to change legislation via the Paris Exhibition of 1867, ‘when it became evident that the country was beginning to lag behind France, Germany and the US’ (Evans, 2007, p.6). Another pressure to educate adults came from those pushing for social reform (sometimes called ‘radicals’) some of whom came to be loosely collated under the umbrella term of

Chartism. The London Working Men's Association, for example, whose minutes from 1836 called for education for, 'intelligent and influential portion of the working classes in town and country' (cited in Rosenblatt, 2010, p.84). Such pressure for education reform resulted in the 1870 Education Act bringing education for all children and the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 which included adults who were to be given 'instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries, and in the application of special branches of science and art to specific industries or employment' (Education England, n.d.a). Adult education was funded further by alcohol sales (or the 'whisky tax' as it became known) when the 1890 Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act allowed a penny tax on alcohol to be diverted to local adult education. Universities caught the zeitgeist of Adult Education (see Evans, 2003; Lawrie, 2014) through the University Extension Movement (which also continues today – see, for example, Oxford University, 2018). Meanwhile, the City and Guilds organisation was created by the guilds in 1878 (City and Guilds, n.d.) to provide adult education and is today one of the major awarding bodies for Adult Education courses.

The foundations of today's Adult Education system, therefore, were set in the 19th Century. By the 20th Century an array of adult courses were available through day continuation schools, evening schools, Mechanics' Institutes, schools of art, polytechnics, university extension classes and working men's colleges (National Archives, 2018). Visionaries such as Henry Morris started the Cambridge Village Colleges which acted as schools in the day and adult education centres at night so that: 'There would be no 'leaving school'! – the child would enter at three and leave the college only in extreme old age' (Morris, 1925 cited in Jeffs, 1999, p.92). This range of institutions was formed for those in the words of Winston Churchill, 'who thirst in later life to learn about the humanities, the history of their country, the philosophies of the human race and the arts' (cited in Hoggart, 1998, p.51). In literature, characters such as H G Wells's Mr Polly (From The History of, published in 1910) follow an early 20th Century working class man in quenching this thirst, searching for a place where, 'there was beauty, there was delight, that somewhere - magically inaccessible perhaps, but still somewhere, were pure and easy and joyous states of body and mind'. Leonard

Bast (E. M. Forster, Howard's End, 1910) similarly from lower-class origins and given an elementary education searched through education for something more: 'His mind and his body had been alike underfed, because he was poor, and because he was modern they were always craving better food'. We can see in literature of the early 20th Century a somewhat romanticized (and often tragic) version of education via characters who try for self-betterment through education only to be thwarted by the harsh reality of class-power. This was certainly not always the case - to take one example, L S Lowry studied at the Salford School of Art – nor was it for all of the 1.9 million people (Bolton, 2012) were involved in Adult Education in 1978 at its peak, each looking, we presume, for something – greater prospects, knowledge, enlightenment or just a better life.

Adult Education continues today through the Open College Network, the Women's Institute, the WEA, the National Trust, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, university extension courses, and a plethora of charities, churches and community centres. Local authorities still fund community education often in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and computing (see Camden.gov (2018) for an example). The national picture is, though, one of an ad hoc provision which seems to be at a permanent 'crossroads' (Finger and Asun, 2004), 'stasis' (Hodgson and Spours, 2003) or even 'crisis' (Tuckett, 2018). It has certainly not featured highly in government priorities of late as the MP David Lammy pointed out in the House of Commons: 'since 2010 this House has discussed education on 339 occasions. There has not been a single debate on adult education—not one… Such total disregard for adult education is not good enough. It is not good to say that if someone does not go to university they cannot progress and are limited to a life of low-paid work with no prospects of change' (Hansard, 2017). An example of the undervalued nature of Adult Education is the closure in 1982 of the Richard Hoggart (who was a great chronicler and champion of the working class) led Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (ACACE). The final ACACE report indicated great demand for 'informal learning' (ACACE, 1982 cited in Evans, 2003, p.25) with over a million students in this sector. That the support and funds of the government were 'siphoned' (Evans, 2003, p.24) off for the Manpower Services Commission (whose name alone would make a liberal educationalist weep) informed about the direction

funding for Adult Education would go from the 1980s – training and vocationalism or to serve the industrial needs of the society. In 1995, the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education took over a 'soft money' (Evans, 2003, p.25) oversight and since 2006 the Open College (see Open College, 2018) has catered for some online education for adults but, 'The adult learning which was fundable was vocational learning' (Evans, 2003, p.26) and this was the province given to FE.

**ii Further Education**

**Key Questions**

- What is Further Education?
- When and why did FE begin?
- How is FE different from the rest of Adult Education?
- What factors affect FE today?

**Key Theory**

The development of a Further Education sector can be traced from the 1944 Education Act. Its history and purposes are explored in the following texts:
Hodgson, A and Spours, K. (2017). Policy and policy learning across the four countries of the UK: The case of further education and skills
Hillier, Y. (2006) Everything You Need to Know about FE Policy. London: Continuum.
Smithers, A. and Robinson, P. (2005) Further Education Reformed. London: Falmer Press.

FE has 'its roots in the Adult Education tradition' (Peart, 2013. p.33) but it was created to serve a post-war industrial and academic purpose and become a third or tertiary sector sitting between school and HE, designed to bridge the gap from school and the workplace or university. Today, institutions deemed to be FE are funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and include sixth form colleges, land-based colleges, art colleges and performing arts colleges. Though we recognise the terms FE and Adult Education (along with the tertiary sector, lifelong learning, post-16, post-compulsory) can be synonymous it is possible to distinguish between the two by using

Hillier's (2006) de facto method of defining FE - created by 1944 Education Act. Anything before this date might be called FE's 'pre-history' (Hillier, 2006, p.21). At this point we are making in Pierre Bourdieu's words a 'symbolic boundary' (see Lamont and Molnar, 2002) by separating out one area of Adult Education from the rest. In addition, we recognize we are doing this in a 'supercomplex' (Barnett, 2000) education landscape where boundaries between institutions are incomplete and vague – FE's move to Higher Education territory is an example of this. As with any boundary creation, making a distinction of FE from Adult Education is a matter of interpretation and contention and we acknowledge both Feather's (2016) view that FE, 'came into being in 1821' with the foundation of the first Mechanics' institute in Edinburgh and Bolton's (2012) that it was 1911 with the first technical instruction colleges.

The 1944 Education Act raised the leaving age of pupils to 15 and charged local authorities to provide post-15 education in, as the parliamentary debate on the Act termed them, 'young people's colleges' (Hansard, 1944): commercial ('white collar' skills); art; technical colleges ('blue collar' skills). The pressure was both on Local Education Authorities (LEA) to find the money to ensure that training was available and on the 16-18 year-olds who would be required to attend for up to eight weeks a year (Education Act, 1944). Many of the initial FE colleges quickly rose to become Colleges of HE (and onto becoming polytechnics then universities of today) but those that catered for the, 'lower-level qualifications... form the core of FE today' (Simmons, 2016, p.34). Sixth Form colleges came later to England and Wales in 1965 from government Circular 10/65 (Education England, n.d.b) giving instruction to local authorities to organise a comprehensive system which included post-16 provision. Initially, not seen as being part of FE they were brought under the same funding mechanism in 1992. By the 1990s, FE was carrying the 'burden of the generation' educating 50% of all 16-18-year-olds, 80% of whom were funded by government (Melville and Macleaod, in Smithers and Robinson, 2000, p.27).

The range of institutions which come under the term ‘FE’ and the importance of the sector is not always fully understood. Calling it the ‘everything else’ sector, Panchamia (2012) notes in a report for the Institute of Government: ‘The further education... sector is poorly defined and understood’. When Sir Michael Wilshaw (Chief Inspector of Ofsted 2012-16) called FE a ‘mess’ in which pupils “head off towards the FE institution which is a large, amorphous institution… and do badly” (TES, 2016) he seems to have not only made a gross generalisation but also ignored the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act which incorporated sixth form and specialist colleges into the definition. Wilshaw’s ‘common sense’ definition of FE as the ‘local tech’ can be seen in the websites defining FE such as this: ‘The main difference from school is that an FE college is a much more adult environment and students will typically call teachers by their first name and be expected to be independent’ (Parentzone, 2018). Even on government-run websites it might be ignored that HE is very much part of FE now: ‘Further education...includes any study after secondary education that’s not part of higher education’ (Gov.uk, n.d.). Notably, in both of these website definitions, FE is defined by what it is not and compared to features of more familiar education zones - schools and HE. Defining FE by what it is not it does not give the sector an identity in its own right nor does it recognise its role in the schooling of under 16s as since the Tomlinson Report (1996), the 14-19 White Paper (DES, 2005) and the Leitch Review (2006) FE is also now for those aged 14+. Furthermore, what FE is in England may be different from other nations in the UK. In Northern Ireland there are only six FE and no sixth form colleges (nidirect, 2018) while Scotland retains its local authority funding system (gov.scot, 2018). Of the four nations of the UK, England is by far the largest country in terms of population with 334 FE colleges in the UK, 288 of them in England, most of these being general FE colleges, 73 sixth form colleges, 14 land-based colleges and 12 specialist designated colleges (AoC, 2017).

Sir Andrew Foster’s review of education in 2005 stated that, ‘FE lacks a clearly recognised and shared core purpose’ one reason being it has ‘suffered from too many initiatives’ (p.7). If we imagine FE to be created by government as a tertiary sector which has a particular purpose, we might see it as an unsteady ship on wavering seas

of political and economic policy, ‘heavily steered by national policy levers, notably funding mechanisms’ (see Hodgson and Spours, 2003). Those involved in FE might testify to how a course begins or is suddenly cut. New governments bring their own prejudices, and solutions to the economy and FE can be used as the place where the perceived economic and societal ills might be solved. FE has had to deal with an array of funding bodies since leaving local authority control including the Young Person’s Learning Agency, the Further Education Funding Council for England, The Education Funding Agency and the Skills Funding Agency. The latter two organisations were amalgamated in 2017 to form the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The changes often seem either cyclical (sometimes in the sense of “here we go again”) or is just a rebranding exercise perhaps in the hope that this time it works – ‘There had been plenty of youth training schemes, none of which showed more than a very modest success’ (Evans, 2003, p.36). Equally, changes may bring a new stream of funding such as the Education and Skills Act (2008) meaning compulsory education up to 18 from 2015 in England (still 16 in the other nations of the UK – see gov.uk, 2018). When the European Commission declared 1996 to be the European Year of Lifelong Learning the largely pro-European ‘New’ Labour government appointed Dr Kim Howells as the country’s first minister of Lifelong Learning (disbanded in 2012), issued a White Paper, created an Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning in 1998 and funded an array of courses (see Field, 2006, p.11). Similarly, a relaxation of laws about HE provision meant the rise of FE as a provider of university-level provision. College-based Higher Education (CBHE) accounts for around 10% of total HE provision in England and has done so for many years (DfES 2003; Avis and Orr 2016) with over 180,000 students (HESA, 2017; UUK, 2016).

Along with legislation, FE is prone to the same trends in society and education namely, in the last few decades, ‘performativity’: ‘A drive for efficiency which assumes that it is possible to precisely gauge and make transparent the performance… through the use of audit technologies.’ (Trotman, Lees and Willoughby, 2018). An example of this is the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act which charged FE institutions to increase their student numbers to 28% while reducing the per capita funding. In other words, ‘run

faster in order to stand still' (Ball, 2006. p.123) which, naturally, by 1995, most institutions had failed to achieve Ball, 2006). Central to the function of performative cultures is the emergence of 'datafication' (focusing on numbers as evidence of success - see Kitchin, 2014) and 'dataveillance' (using these numbers to monitor performance - see Mattern, 2013). The measurement of everything and the way these numbers can be used to monitor providers have meant profound changes in FE – mainly towards 'gaming' the system with a focus on the new 3 Rs of recruitment, retention and results. For some such as Sir Andrew Foster, this 1992 Act was 'a defining moment of liberation' for FE. This is all part of the social and economic trend of neoliberalism (free market economy, providing equal chance to all to succeed) which has taken hold of the Western world including the UK (see Harvey, 2005). For FE, the changes have meant: 'Colleges became businesses, academic principals became chief executives and… college governors were made responsible for financial management, strategic direction and getting their institutions 'competition-ready'' (AoC, 2015). It is no surprise that given the need to focus on end-data, colleges moved to mergers, the 500+ colleges in 1992 became 332 by 2016 (AoC, 2018b). The 1992 Act meant a competitive industry ethos, against schools, universities and the new private post-16 education providers that were encouraged. Colleges now bid for money from whatever sources there are: Funding Council, European Social Fund, employers, universities, Training and Enterprise Councils (and their various guises over the decades), students and still the local authority.

### 1.3 The Purposes of Adult Education and FE

**Key Questions**

- What makes adult and further education different from the rest of the education system?
- What do adult and further education give to society?
- How might adult and further education change in the future?

**Key Theory**

For a clear review of the purposes and benefits of Adult Education see:
Finger, M. and Asun. J. (2004) Adult Education at the Crossroads: Learning Our Way Out. Leicester NIACE.
Evans, N. (2003) Making Sense of Lifelong Learning. London RoutledgeFarmer

As the histories show, Adult Education and FE 'bridges the gap' between school and university/work, offer a lifelong community-based model of education (including HE) and then go on to enrich lives with the purpose and joy of learning. Throughout the histories of the adult and further education sectors, key purposes emerge: a) serving the local community, (b) providing an adult space for learning, (c) inclusion, and (d) a 'second chance' sector.

a) To serve the local community.

The Adult Education and FE sectors have a 'vital role in vocational and community education' (Duckworth, 2014, p.3), in meeting the needs of local communities (O'Leary and Rami, 2017) and of fostering local and regional level partnerships with employers (Hodgson and Spours, 2017). The 1956 White Paper, Technical Education (see National Archives Cabinet Papers, n.d.) determined 'meeting local needs' as a central role while the FEFC today considers FE education to be 'within reasonable daily travelling distance from their homes' (Education Act, 1996).

b) To provide a learning space for adults.

FE and Adult Education provide a refreshing difference from the compulsory sector's National Curriculum's limitations curriculum and exam-system, giving subjects that were not accessible at school (see Green, 1986). With a greater focus on student choice the sectors allow an 'ethos of support, encouragement, choice and challenge' (Pleasance,

2016, p.13) for those who are part of it. The vocational nature of many courses means there should be a greater sense of purposeful study focusing on an inner drive to achieve. There should be a grown-up approach to learning not only in the amount of autonomy expected from the students but in the style of delivery which should be more dialogic with an andragogical (see Knowles, 1990) ethos.

c) To provide an education space inclusive to all.

As the history shows, adult and further education have 'strong bonds with disadvantaged groups and communities' (Duckworth, 2014, p.6). For Avis (2016) 'the heterogeneity of students' (p.93) in FE is a key feature to be praised as befits a sector which grew up out of a need to educate the poor. FE students, in particular, tend to be working-class (Thompson, 2009). A purpose of education for adults is therefore social justice by "facilitating social mobility of those drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds" (Avis, 2016, p.85). Education in such areas brings 'transformatory empowerment' (Duckworth and Smith, 2017) to individuals and communities.

d) To be a second-chance sector.

The Adult Education and FE sectors have a purpose to support 'disaffected and demotivated young people and adults' (Smith and Swift, 2014, p.258) and as such is a 'second chance' (Smithers and Robinson, 2000, p.3) sector in which students 'let down' by the compulsory system can find an education space in which they can thrive. This can include those who enter at 14 years old and 'returners to education' who change career and/or up-skill (McLay et al., 2010).

Through the political, cultural and legislative climate changes these central purposes have persisted. Of course, the purposes of education for each individual student will vary. Jenny Rogers's Adults Learning (2001) originally published in 1971 gave some including dealing with isolation (especially for the housewives of the time) and other social motives. In 2017, Duckworth and Smith recounted the narratives of 'transformed lives', each individual recounting how adult and further education had given them a new

opportunity. Education brings so many benefits: 'There is powerful evidence that adults who keep learning enjoy better health, are more productive and have more secure and better- paid jobs and are more active in civic life. Equally, offenders who take up learning are less likely to re-offend. And people recover better from mental ill health if they engage in learning' (Tuckett, 2018). This is in line with Eduard Linderman's (1895-1953) definition of education for adults as 'a co-operative venture in non-authoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience' (cited in Finger and Asun, 2004, p.37). Education of adults is also a civilising force with tenets: learning, conviviality, responsibilisation, participation (see Illich, 1974 and 2001). Along with the visions of Linderman and Illich we can add those of John Henry Newman, John Dewey, Malcom Knowles who had a common idea that education should be human and that it is a core desire and destiny. Perhaps we can also 'piggyback' onto the ideas of those who sympathise with critical pedagogues from the Marxist tradition such as Paolo Freire and see the way education frees us from the restricted thinking of the times and is a pedagogy (or andragogy) of hope.

These ideal purposes of education for adults are not always evident in the reality of FE and Adult Education in the UK. In the report 'Making Lifelong Learning a Reality for All' (UNESCO, 1996) Jacques Delors (then President of the European Commission) called lifelong learning 'a continuous process of forming whole human beings'. In the UK, The Dearing report of 1997 reinterpreted this report into: 'individuals and their working lives sustaining a competitive economy' (see Evans, 2003, p.30). In the UK, it seems, the 'protestant work ethic' Max Weber identified in the 19th Century is still very much with us when it comes to education policy. Nevertheless, Adult Education and FE are very much alive in terms of variety and participation. A snapshot of adult and further education today includes publicly-funded courses, privatised provision, College-based Higher Education, community and work-based learning. In 2017, according to the Association of Colleges the FE sector alone in the UK accounted for 2.2 million students including 1.4 million 18+ and 712,000 16–18 (AoC, 2018a). In 2015-2016, FE had a £7 billion income, 50% from the Department for Education's (DfE) CHECK 16–18 funds, 25% from DfE funds for adult education and apprenticeships with the final 25% coming

from fees, grants and other funding bodies (AoC, 2018a). The sometimes informal nature of Adult Education makes participation harder to gauge but the Department for Education (2016) survey resulted in 78% of respondents engaging in learning ((ONS, 2016, p.5).

It is worth, here, thinking about possibilities. What would happen, say, if education were fully funded and each individual could choose a course and a style of study. This utopian vision must surely have passed the minds of those who saw a social revolution - or just dreamers. This seemingly utopian vision is nearer than we think as Tuckett (2018) summarised, there are precedents of successful education for adults models across the world:

*'*In Europe, all the Nordic countries maintain substantial public financial support for open exploratory liberal education, where citizens can learn a wide range of subjects. In Switzerland, Austria and Germany vocational education enjoys high esteem and public investment, in stark contrast to the weakening of funding for the vocational education sector in the UK. Investment in lifelong learning, meanwhile, has attracted significant and impressive commitment, backed by legislation, in several Asian countries... For example, the city of Suwon in South Korea guarantees a library within 10 minutes' walk and a learning centre within 20 minutes' of every citizen's home, with close co-operation with the city's universities. In Singapore, too, the combination of national investment, support for business and individual learning accounts, backed by active support from higher education, creates optimal conditions for creating a learning society – using measures many of which were introduced and too quickly dropped in the UK.'

Looking for a further international perspective on adult education, we might also turn to the UNESCO's recommendation of 'education permanente': lifelong, purposeful, humanistic, emancipatory and 'aimed at bringing out the full potential of human beings and enabling them to shape their societies' (Effert, 2018, p.1). The UK should, in our view, remove from the sectors those aspects which include dataveillance, market-focus, subject and institution elitism and focus on the promotion of education that brings a holistic sense of the self. As a starting point policy for those educating adults policy

could be more proactive towards a system based on the positive values of education for all for purposes of human emancipation and less reactive (Hodgson and Spours, 2003) to the perceived shortcomings of the compulsory sector and the needs of commerce. We are not the first to call for this nor will we be the last and as Rogers and Hammerstein once wrote and no doubt sang: 'You've got to have a dream. If you don't have a dream. How you gonna have a dream come true?'

### 1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have also given a definition and history of Adult Education and FE and isolated some common features: local provision, adult-focused education, inclusivity and a second chance to succeed in education. Some of this history we have lived through having taught English as an additional language to immigrants to the UK who wanted to start a new life in England, provided vocational courses for those who wanted to improve their business communication skills, taught students over 80 years old English who came to an FE college at night for no other reason than to learn more about the joy of literature and the pleasure of learning. We have had postmen as students to our evening class, prey to early mornings, falling asleep in our evening classes (and exams!). As co-ordinators of teacher training of lifelong learning, we have witnessed Adult Education classes in churches, community centres, libraries on weekday evenings and Saturday mornings. We have been present when students with mental health issues have been explaining how a dictionary could not be opened as the words keep coming out in a class whose sole aim was to help a student with severe learning difficulties boil a kettle safely. We have listened while a pupil who had a very high degree of dyslexia made his first phone call to someone to communicate something and gain a first certificate after years of failure in mainstream education and finally learning, at 17, to spell his name correctly. From all of our experiences, we believe in Adult Education and FE and the working woman and man of yesterday and today who walks through the doors of a place of adult education in order to improve life

and that of her/his children and from our years as students, teachers and teacher-trainers in adult and further education we have witnessed why it matters.

## Chapter Summary

- Adult Education as we know it today in the UK grew out of the 19th Century when a range of providers including industry, individuals, charities and churches gave the working class a place and space to study. The motives behind them varied though a desire to improve minds of the working class, to give industrial skills and moral betterment were among the main ones.
- During the last two centuries, Adult Education has fluctuated in its importance to government. Since the 1980s, its role has declined although there are still many who are being educated today through the Open College, community provision from local authorities and a range of providers.
- Government financial support largely moved to Further Education which was set up in 1944 as a tertiary or third sector between school and HE/work. FE is often charged to support the latest government initiative and often whatever skills or knowledge seem to be missing from that provided by the compulsory sector.
- Key themes emerge from the history which informs the sectors' purposes: community-based, inclusive of all, andragogical education styles and a second-chance to succeed beyond the compulsory sector.
- Education freely available for all may be a dream stance but in different countries there are models of practice which show they see the value to society of making sure adults have access to places to develop their minds, bodies and even spirits - as many classes are provided by religious organisations.

**Further Recommended Reading**

We recommend you go to the works of Vicky Duckworth and Jonathan Tummons separately and together using this text:
Duckworth, V. and Tummons, J. (2010) Contemporary issues in lifelong learning. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
John Lea is another key thinker and writer on the nature of adult and further education and we recommend his work such as:
Lea, J. Hayes, D, Armitage, A. Lomas, L., Markless, S. (2003) Working in Post-compulsory Education. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

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