

GOVERNING LITERACY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS DECADES OF LITERACY, 1990–2000 AND 2003–2012

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Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), this study examines constructs of literacy and literacy education embedded in policy documents related to the United Nations Decades of Literacy (1990–2000 and 2003–2012) and argues that two important shifts related to discourse occur between the policies. The first shift is manifest in the construction of literacy as a concept and reflects the rising influence of New Literacy Studies (NLS), a body of research that emphasizes the plural, contextual, “ideological” (Street, 1993) nature of literacy as social practice. The second shift is marked by the intensification of the discourse of “new capitalism” (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996), which focuses on the societalization of economic globalization. In the “interdiscursive” (Fairclough, 2003) relationship between these two shifts, the discourse of new capitalism circumscribes features of the emerging “ideological” constructs of literacy, steering the policy’s agenda toward neo-liberalist ends. In clarifying discursive relationships in these influential policies, this study contributes to an emerging body of scholarship (see Street, 2003) that connects socio-cultural models of literacy to the discursive production of meaning in institutional literacy work.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Josie Lauritsen holds a B.A. in English with an Anthropology minor from Brigham Young University and a M.A. in Rhetoric and Composition from Arizona State. Formerly an International Programs Officer/Training Specialist with ProLiteracy Worldwide, she has worked with literacy and development organizations in Latin America and Southeast Asia. She has also been an adult education instructor with Rio Salado Colleges in Phoenix, Arizona and a lecturer in several departments at Cornell University. In addition to this dissertation, she has conducted ethnographic research on indigenous literacies in Mam and K'iche communities in Guatemala. She has published international literacy manuals related to human rights and community development, and her work has appeared in *Women's Studies Quarterly* and *Adult Education Quarterly*. Josie is married to Brandon Lee; their son, Noah Benjamin, was born in June of 2004.

For Brandon

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INTRODUCTION

In 1986 the *New York Times* published a statement by the director of the Philadelphia Mayor's Committee On Literacy regarding illiterate Americans who are "hostages to a problem of frightening dimensions" (as cited in Rockhill, 1993, p. 157). According to the director, the problem of illiteracy is "frightening because . . . [it] costs billions of dollars each year. . . . Frightening because it is embedded in the social landscape of crime, drug abuse and hopelessness. . . . But frightening, too, because of the debilitating effect of illiteracy on our ideals of citizenship and liberty" (as cited in Rockhill, p. 157). In 1999 a large private literacy foundation in Guatemala similarly advertised their campaign on a flyer with photographic scenes from the life of a well-dressed, literate "Juan" smiling broadly as he finishes high school and college. Next to these scenes are a series of photos depicting an illiterate "Juan" clutching the chain link fence of a juvenile detention center and entering prison. The caption reads, "Between these two lives the difference is knowing how to read and write."

All too common depictions such as these treat literacy "as a mass term . . . concerned with 'how much' of it people have (like money or virtue)" (Gee, 1989, p. 26). Reified and commodified, literacy is cast as a simple, technical proficiency that upon reception will produce a predictable and measurable set of desirable consequences. This perspective presents an ostensibly clear mandate: the unproblematic distribution of skill—or, as the former Director-General of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) puts it, "the goal of universal literacy" (Mayer, 1999, p. xiii).

On its face, such an objective seems laudable—and indeed, from one point of view it is. Marshalling resources around what appears to be educational equity is a praiseworthy endeavor. However, when in such an endeavor, literacy is reduced to a set of decontextualized skills for mass dissemination, the lived social contexts of those

purported to be beneficiaries are generally discounted. This negation of context in the face of technical concerns has consequences for societies' least powerful, including the reproduction of subordination, the misdirection of material and social resources, and the dismissal or obstruction of cultural/civic action and identity (for detailed discussion see Street, 1995). When the social/cultural practices, ideologies, institutions, and power differentials involved in the construction and applications of literacy are disregarded, the equalizing, humanizing potential of literacy education is diminished (Hornberger, 1999; Rockhill, 1993).

The following dissertation explores this apparent breach in discursive purpose, common to many public literacy endeavors. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), the study compares discursive features of policy documents related to the United Nations Decades of Literacy (1990–2000 and 2003–2012)¹ and discusses the social-structural, political, and material implications of these features for the construction of literacy as a concept and the delivery of literacy services. The theoretical center of this project is an emerging body of scholarship known as New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Street, 1993). NLS calls attention to the culturally bound, socially constructed, ideological nature of multiple literacies, which, when understood and appropriately applied to pedagogy and policy, can foster more equitable approaches to education. Also central to the analysis is a body of discourse-oriented research related to “new capitalism” (e.g., Fairclough, 2003; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). This research has emerged in recent years to highlight the ways that contemporary forces of economic globalization order social life and are reproduced through structures of language. Research related to new capitalism and New Literacy Studies informs the foregoing analysis by providing lenses through which the study critically examines the operation

¹ These documents are plans generated by the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO)—arguably the world’s most influential institutional advocate of literacy—and provide a framework for global literacy efforts encompassing 20 years.

of particular discourses in the policy texts. Critical discourse analysis, the methodological foundation for this study, seeks to “denaturalize ideologies that have been naturalized” (Rogers, 2004, p. 252), with the intention of bringing “a system of excessive inequalities of power into crisis by uncovering its workings . . . and thereby help in achieving a more equitable social order” (Kress, 1996, p. 15). As such, careful consideration is given to how particular discourses operate within the policy texts “to define the parameters of particular questions, to set the rules for particular practices, and to shape particular [literacy] agendas” (Edmonson, 2002, as cited in Woodside-Jiron, 2004, p. 175).

The central thesis of this analysis is that two important shifts related to discourse occur between the Decades of Literacy beginning in 1990 and 2003. The first shift relates to constructs of literacy and reflects the rising influence of models that regard literacy as ideological, situated social practice. These models, generally associated with scholarship in New Literacy Studies, operate within a discourse referred to in this study as “ideological” (Street, 1993). The ideological discourse emerged in direct opposition to the traditional, “autonomous” (Street) discourse that casts literacy as an isolated, ideologically neutral skill. As the foregoing dissertation demonstrates, the language of the contemporary Decade, when compared to that of the former, represents a clear shift away from the traditional, autonomous discourse on literacy toward a perspective *approximating* the ideological model. Though this apparently deliberate shift represents a significant move by UNESCO to give a policy voice to contemporary literacy scholarship, in the end, the shift amounts to a series of technical adjustments. The substance of NLS discourse—a concern with the diffusion of ideology and power through literacy activities—is absent from the policy, and thus the shift is incomplete.

The second shift that occurs between the policy documents relates to the social and material contexts that govern the practice of literacy. Between the two policies there is a marked intensification of the discourse of “new capitalism” (Fairclough, 2003; Gee et al., 1996). The amplified presence of this discourse in the 2003 document clearly steers the policy’s literacy agendas toward neo-liberalist ends. Though new capitalism is not the only discourse present in the document, it is powerfully “naturalized” (Fairclough) so as to effectively supplant other discursive possibilities. The resulting interplay between the ideological discourse on literacy and the discourse of new capitalism—in which the former is compromised by the latter—limits the policy’s potential to effectuate substantive social change.

In tracing the influence of particular discourses in policy documents, this dissertation calls attention to the ways language constructs representations of the world that have implications for the distribution of material and social goods. Specifically, this study clarifies how assumptions about literacy—“the models that people [hold] underpinning their uses of literacy—[are] . . . sources of power relations. If agencies and educational institutions could convince others that the only model of literacy was theirs . . . then the particular cultural values that underpinned this surface neutrality could be sustained whilst not appearing to be so” (Collins & Blot, 2003, p. xiii). By interrogating this “surface neutrality,” this study advocates an approach to research, policy, and pedagogy that accounts for the wide range of ideologically-laden social practices that dialectically influence the practice of literacy. In so doing, it contributes to an emerging body of research (e.g., Gee et al., 1996; Luke, 1995; Rogers, 2004; Street, 1995) that calls attention to the discursive obstacles and prospects en route to developing more transparent and equitable approaches to education.

A note on organization: Critical discourse analysis is not a traditional social-scientific form of inquiry. As such, this dissertation does not strictly follow conventional organizational formats. It begins with a review of literature related to New Literacy Studies that sets up the theoretical framework of the study. This review is followed by a discussion of methodology, which includes a brief review of literature related to new capitalism. This second review, together with the review of NLS, provides a framework that is operationalized in the analysis to identify key discursive trends. The data, analyses, and results are integrated together in the chapter called “Data and Analysis”; the discussion and conclusion are also combined.

Literature Review

Two decades ago, Kenneth Levine (1986) appropriately characterized literacy as

a complex amalgam of psychological, linguistic, and social processes layered one on top of another like a rich and indigestible gâteau. Different varieties of academic specialists cut slices out of this cake with the conceptual equipment their disciplinary training has taught them to favour. Consumers of the cake (teachers, pupils, politicians, employers) have very different appetites and push and jostle each other to secure a wedge of a particular size and, if possible, try to get their preferred wedge defined as the standard helping for everybody else. (p. 22)

As Levine suggests, the content and tenor of literacy debates vary widely across institutional, disciplinary, and programmatic domains. Rather than attempt to fully historicize or disentangle these debates—an important project completed elsewhere (Collins, 1995, 2003; Wagner, Venezky, & Street, 1999)—the following review will make a case for a particular view of literacy advanced by scholars whose work, known

as New Literacy Studies (NLS), provides the theoretical framework for this study.² To position this framework, the review (1) contextualizes the emergence of NLS against competing technical, historical, and psycholinguistic models; (2) outlines the tenets of NLS, with specific focus on the multiple, ideological nature of literacies; (3) acknowledges important research conducted in NLS; (4) identifies gaps in the research that this study intends to address; and (5) affirms the political stance and significance of this and other NLS-based research. This premise of this review is that NLS provides important conceptual frameworks that ought to substantively inform approaches to literacy and literacy education in policy texts. As such, part of the subsequent analysis that builds on the review traces features of NLS-related discourse in the UNESCO policy texts used as data in this study.

Traditional Literacy Studies

Traditional approaches to literacy research assume two basic strands of inquiry: “one concerned with questions about the consequences of reading and writing for individual and cognitive processes, the other considering the functional operation of literacy within specific modern institutions” (Street, 1993, pp. 10–11). In these strands, researchers have extracted literacy from social contexts and examined it as an independent, “autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character” (Street, p. 5)—“a universal constant whose acquisition, once individual problems can be overcome by proper diagnosis and pedagogy, will lead to higher cognitive skills, to improved logical thinking, to critical inquiry and to self-conscious reflection” (Street, p. 11). Centered on this “literacy

² This review focuses specifically on academic literature produced by scholars/researchers who explicitly seek to construct a theory of literacy. I recognize that there is an extensive body of literature produced by and for practitioners (teachers, professionals in programming and policy) that also contributes to theories of literacy. However, the theoretical framework for this study emerged in large part from academic/theory-driven research and dialogue, so I will limit this review to these particular scholarly conversations.

thesis,” as it has come to be called (see Collins, 1995), is a substantial and highly influential body of research (Goody, 1977, 1986, 1987; Olson, 1977; Ong, 1982; Oxenham, 1980), which assigns the “imputed ‘consequences,’ ‘implications,’ or ‘concomitants’ of . . . literacy’s acquisition a truly daunting number of cognitive, affective, behavioral, and attitudinal effects [including] empathy, innovativeness, achievement orientation, cosmopolitanism, information and media awareness, national identification, technological acceptance, rationality [and] . . . urban residence” (Graff, 1995, p. 10). Using broad analytical strokes, scholars in this tradition have applied descriptions such as these to contemporary and historical accounts of individuals and societies, creating an easy and less-than-critical dichotomy, a conceptual “Great Divide” (see Collins) between “nonliterate” and “literate” people(s). The former are characterized as “formulaic, conservative, ‘close to the human lifeworld,’ agonistically toned, empathetic, homeostatic, and situational” (Ong, as cited in Street, p. 153) and the latter as “abstract, analytic, distancing, objective and separative” (Ong, as cited in Street, p. 153). Assuming “a clear, cumulative distinction between literacy and orality and . . . that the literacy of the West was somehow exceptional to all other literacies” (Collins, p. 76), the binary operations rooted in the Great Divide continue to pervade political and popular thought today:

In the popular imagination, literacy is the most significant distinguishing feature of a civilized man [sic] and a civilized society. Expressions of these attitudes are readily culled from the popular press. . . . The assumption that nonliteracy is a problem with dreadful social and personal consequences is not only held by laymen, it is implicit in the writings of academics as well.³

(Olson, as cited in Graff, 1987, p. 2)

³ Street (1995), for example cites Debbie Cameron’s *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*, “one of the most influential books of the last decade” (p. 3), as an example of how the literacy thesis pervades even academic inquiry. In the book, Cameron cites Ong (1982) and Oxenham (1980), as Street states, “uncritically”: “the more literate people are, the more willing they are to work for improvements in their

Collins (1995) suggests the claims associated with the literacy thesis and its attendant Great Divide have scholarly roots in the early research on printing (Einstein, 1968, 1980), in anthropological investigations of literacy as a “technology of the intellect” (Goody, 1977, 1986, 1987; Olson, 1977; Ong, 1982; Oxenham, 1980), and in the work of historical and comparative psychologists on cognition (Greenfield, 1972; Luria, 1976; Olson, 1977). Among the most influential of these studies is Goody and Watts’ (1963) classic essay in which the researchers argue, as Collins (1995) states, that “the alphabetic literacy that flowered in ancient Greece . . . and subsequently developed in Medieval and modern Europe” caused “basic transformations in the nature of knowledge and cultural tradition, in particular (a) a distinction between myth and history, (b) a distinction between opinion and truth (formalizable inquiry or logic), and (c) a distinction between acceptance of received tradition and a skepticism about tradition, which leads to individuation and democratic social forms” (p. 77). These transformations were conceived as a primary basis for western social and intellectual/scientific development, which was viewed as superior to the development that occurred in other societies.

The analytical problem with this argument and others based on the literacy thesis is that they depend “on various bracketing operations to establish comparability and provide historical trajectory” (Collins, 1995, p. 78). In recent years, critics of the literacy thesis have worked to expose these bracketing operations⁴ from different disciplinary angles, making explicit the fact that

societies. . . . They become more willing to reason for themselves, less willing to take opinions on authority; (Oxenham, 1980, p. 51; cited in Cameron, 1985, p. 147)” (Street, p. 3). Cameron’s unproblematic acceptance of this position is one of many examples of the dogged persistence of the literacy thesis in academic thought.

⁴ Collins (1995) describes these bracketing operations as follows: “Goody, Ong, and Olson have been forced to draw distinctions between full, genuine, alphabetic literacy, and all other uses of script, so-called restricted literacies, which fail to show the predicted consequences. . . . Their arguments also require historical periodizing” (p. 78).

there is little or no validity to the time honored dichotomy of the “literate tradition and the oral tradition.” Cultural diversities in the uses of writing, reading and their links to speaking provide not a dichotomy, but multiple-faceted continua in which oral and written language structures and functions intersect in a wide variety of ways. (Heath, 1996, p. 13)

As Graff (1987) states,

A . . . fact is the complexity of the relationship between the oral and the written cultures and traditions. Students of literacy have hopelessly confused the issues as they have sought to separate these modes of communication and discourse into sharp dichotomies in which one mechanism must dominate all of the others. We stress the oral origins of literacy, the persistence and perspicacity of oral communications, and the continuing interactions of these two primary modes. (p. 16)

To empirically demonstrate this reality, scholars have challenged the literacy thesis using modes of inquiry similar to those used to originally establish the thesis. Gough (1968), for example, took a macro-historical view of literacy in Ancient India and China to refute claims made by Goody and Watt (1963) about the spread of alphabetic literacy in Ancient Greece, demonstrating that

claims about the superior spread of alphabetic literacy do not hold, as both India and China had a similar scale of (nonalphabetic) literacy to Ancient Greece; claims that literacy caused historiography do not hold, for China has a historiographic tradition, while India does not; claims about Western literacy, the concern with systematic truth, and the development of science do not hold, for China developed impressive traditions of systematic science without alphabetic literacy. (Collins, 1995, p. 79)

Other historical studies of Greece (Wood & Wood, 1978) and Medieval England (Clanchy, 1979), for example, have also problematized Great Divide claims by highlighting the “role of social interest in the reconstruction of the past” (Collins, 1995, p. 79). These studies reveal that classical accounts of orality/literacy provide undercontextualized renderings of history and society, making obsolete the central tenet of the literacy thesis: “that literacy can be treated as a thing-in-itself, as an autonomous technology” (Collins, p. 78).

In addition to these historical studies, anthropological and psycholinguistic studies have also challenged the divide by examining existing oral cultures. Scribner and Cole’s (1981) landmark study, conducted among the African Vai, for example, tested the relationship of English, Arabic, and Vai script literacy to individual cognitive and societal characteristics. The study’s findings indicate that the traits traditionally attributed to “literate” and “nonliterate,” such as those cited above, are not consequences of literacy *per se*, but rather a product of other environmental factors such as western-type schooling. Contrary to prevailing psycholinguistic thought, in none of their experiments designed to gauge logic, memory, abstraction and communication, “did [they] find all nonliterate performing at lower levels than all literate” (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 251). Nor did they find that the advent of Vai Script literacy was “a prime mover in social change” (Scribner & Cole, p. 239), contrary to expectations of many social scientists. “[Vai Script literacy] has not set off a dramatic modernizing sequence; it has not been accompanied by rapid developments in technology, art, and science; it has not led to the growth of new intellectual disciplines” (Scribner & Cole, p. 239). The results of their study are “in direct conflict with persistent claims that ‘deep psychological differences’ divide literate and nonliterate populations” (Scribner & Cole, p. 251). Having dismantled popular myths regarding the autonomous properties of literacy, Scribner and Cole locate literacy

among a “configuration of practices” (Scribner & Cole, p. 259) that other scholars (e.g., Akinnaso, 1992; Fingeret, 1983; Finnegan, 1988) examined as well. These studies find that

nonliterate peoples can not only have richly developed philosophies of language but also systematic awareness of language as form, richly developed metalinguistic discourse . . . and systematic formal procedures of inquiry. . . . This suggestion goes against the arguments of Ong, Olson and collaborators and against early work on literacy and metalinguistic awareness, relation to language in oral vs. written discourse, and the greater formality of written vs. oral inquiry. (Collins, 1995, p. 79)

These studies demonstrate that the failure of the literacy thesis to hold has to do with “a priori ignoring evidence of nonliterate abstraction . . . or by failing to separate effects of schooling from effects of literacy” (Collins, 1995, pp. 79–80)—one of the major “bracketing operations” (Collins) of Great Divide research.

In light of these developments, even the most staunch and influential proponents of the literacy thesis are weakening their arguments (Collins, 1995, p. 80). Goody, for example, “has steadily softened his claims about literacy and logic . . . and Olson’s latest treatment of the subject concedes that alphabetic literacy is not inherently superior to other scripts, and literacy does not by itself cause cognitive or cultural development” (Collins, p. 80). Still, a strong “literate bias is part of our academic common sense” (Collins, p. 78), and as such, deeply entrenched Great Divide assumptions are extremely difficult to disengage. To replace these assumptions with well theorized, culturally nuanced, ethically conceived understandings of literacy requires a consolidated intellectual effort. One such major effort began in the early 1980s with scholars whose work comprises “New Literacy Studies” (for original descriptions of the research program see Barton, 1994; Gee, 1996; Street, 1995).

New Literacy Studies

Over the last few decades, the influence of new literacy studies on theories of literacy has been significant:

Understanding of literacy has expanded dramatically since the early 1980s with the emergence of “new literacy studies.” . . . Developments from a range of social theory perspectives have progressively chipped away at the virtual monopoly over educational research of text-based practices previously exercised by psychologists of one type or another. Freed from the stranglehold of positivist technicism, those working from a new literacy studies perspective have come to appreciate the radically plural and discursive character of literacy. (Lankshear & Knobel, 1997, p. 95)

This understanding is, in part, a constitutive outgrowth of the larger “social turn”⁵ that has taken place across various disciplines during the last several decades. This turn has challenged the focus on behaviorist and cognitivist approaches that marked most social scientific research in the early and middle twentieth century, concentrating instead on social and cultural explanations for human behavior and circumstances (Gee, 2000). Like the wider social turn movement, NLS is “based on the view that reading and writing only make sense when studied in context of social and cultural (and we can add historical, political and economic) practices of which they are but a part” (Gee, p. 180).

⁵ Gee (2000) cites the following major theoretical/methodological models that contributed to the social turn and arose alongside NLS: ethnomethodology, conversational analysis and interactional sociolinguistics; discursive psychology; ethnography of speaking; sociohistorical psychology; situated cognition and activity theory; cultural models theory; cognitive linguistics; science and technology studies; modern composition theory; connectionism; narrative studies; evolutionary approaches to mind and behaviour; modern sociology; and post-structuralism and postmodernism.

Literacy Events and Literacy Practices

NLS, with its vigilant attention to the social, has generated bold new theoretical models in which the pervasive notion of a “neutral Literacy with a big ‘L’ and a single y” (Street, 1995, p. 2) has been replaced by the concepts of “literacy events” (Heath, 1983) and “literacy practices” (Street, 1993). First described by Heath, the term “literacy event” refers to “any instance in which talk revolves around a piece of writing” (p. 386). “Literacy events have social interactional rules that regulate the type and amount of talk about what is written, and define ways in which oral language reinforces, denies, extends, or sets aside the written material” (Heath, p. 386). These social interactional rules dictate other forms of social action as well, circumscribing participants, locations, ideologies, and performances. As such, literacy events are highly contextualized cultural encounters that may assume various forms from religious rituals (Besnier, 1995) to event planning (Teale, 1987) to bedtime stories (Heath, 1996). Participants in literacy events do not simply engage in isolated reading or writing tasks; they enact roles and engage practices that have become part of their communicative repertoires through diverse processes of socialization. These processes and the social interactional rules that enable literacy events thus become the crucial focus of the critical observer.

In her now classic ethnography, *Ways With Words*, Heath (1983) illustrates how these social interactional rules govern local literacy events in two communities in the Piedmont Carolinas, Roadville and Trackton. Though the communities are geographically proximate, the socio-cultural practices that construct local literacy events vary significantly across them. Heath details how this variance is tightly linked to culture, class, race, and gender and illustrates how these practices are supported or subverted by local institutions—homes and schools in particular. Heath (1983) describes this variance as follows:

What is written—whether it be obituary, recipe, or letter—calls up multiple specific cases, from which Roadville and Trackton members move to make generalizations and—sometimes—to decide on their own course of action. In each community, there are established patterns of language use around the written word: types of questions to be asked, listening behaviors to be observed, and types of talk by individuals or groups about reading and writing . . . the forms, occasions, content and functions of their reading and writing differ greatly from each other, and each varies in degree and kind from patterns followed by the townspeople. (p. 231)

As demonstrated in Heath's account, "The language interactions around texts have an immediate function in accomplishing bureaucratic or educational tasks, but they also serve to induct the individual into the discourses of wider social structures, which have specific consequences for people's positioning in relation to particular kinds of knowledge, their social relationships and their sense of identity" (Maybin, 2000, p. 205).

Developed from Heath's notion of literacy events, Street's (1993, 1995) term, "literacy practices," "refers to both behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualizations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing" (1995, p. 2). As Barton and Hamilton (2000) explain,

When we talk about practices . . . this is not just the superficial choice of a word but the possibilities that shape this perspective offers for a new theoretical understandings about literacy. . . . Literacy practices are the general cultural ways of utilising written language which people draw upon in their lives. In the simplest sense literacy practices are what people do with literacy. However, practices are not observable units of behaviour since they also involve values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships (see Street 1993, p.

12). This includes people's awareness of literacy, constructions of literacy and discourses of literacy, how people talk about and make sense of literacy. These are processes internal to the individual; at the same time, practices are the social processes which connect people with one another, and they include shared cognitions represented in ideologies and social identities. (pp. 7–8)

In a further summary statement, Barton and Hamilton (2000) offer six propositions for understanding literacy practices as “the basic unit of a social theory of literacy” (p. 7):

1. Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts.
2. There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.
3. Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power⁶ relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others.
4. Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
5. Literacy is historically situated.
6. Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making. (p. 8)

In his influential study of an Iranian village, Street (1984) ethnographically supports the notion of literacy practices by describing the relationships between local literacy practices, historicized social identities, and institutions. These literacy

⁶ “Power” is an embattled term in contemporary social theory; a detailed exploration of its definitional history is beyond the scope of this study. For the purposes of this dissertation, I rely on Foucault's (e.g., 1977) relational notion of power because it has particular relevance where education and discourse are concerned, as explained in the quotation below. It is widely accepted as a basic tenet of critical discourse analysis (see Luke, 1995):

For Foucault, power is a strategic terrain and the site of a relationship between the powerful and the powerless; it is wielded via the discourses of various institutions (such as the law, medicine and, of course education) and operates by means of a process of definition and exclusion. A discursive formation thus defines what can be said, written about and acted on regarding a particular subject by virtue of a complex network of unwritten rules. (Johnson, et al., 2004, p. 198)

practices involve socio-cultural and political conventions that render them operative and legible to those within the culture but resistant to imposition from without. One such literacy, “maktab” literacy, is fostered in traditional religious schools (or “maktabas”) and combines aspects of Koranic learning with elements of social life particular to a specific village. Street describes “maktab” literacy as follows:

[Villagers’] acquaintance with [maktab literacy] . . . means, for instance, that they will perceive the kind of literacy being thrust upon them and their children through modern education systems, through new forms of commerce or even just in their experience of the organization and layout of a modern city in a way that is different from those who have not been to the “maktab” or from those who take their “maktab” literacy further. (p. 133)

As literacy practices associated the maktab overlap with practices from other institutions, local meanings are produced. In this way, “maktab” literacy constitutes an element of social life that affects individual and collective identity and action and is in turn affected by it.

The concepts of literacy events and literacy practices form the analytical backbone of the NLS research program. Maybin (2000) explains the conceptual and methodological relationship between literacy events and practices:

Literacy events like writing up your school project, reversioning a prison canteen form, doing an exercise in a family literacy scheme, or filling in a form at the cattle auction, invoke broader cultural and historical patterns of literacy practices, and instantiate them, or subvert them, or comment on them in some way. These literacy events are also shaped by the aims and priorities of individual participants, and have important personal and practical consequences for their . . . sense of who they are, and for how they relate to the institutional imperatives that shape their lives. Thus literacy events are

particularly rich in individual and social meaning, and the notion of literacy practices provides an important conceptual and methodological framework for looking at the interrelationships between the following three levels of analysis:

- (a) individual activities, understandings and identities
- (b) social events and interactions they involve
- (c) broader social and institutional structures. (p. 198)

Focusing on these levels of analysis, a growing number of scholars associated with NLS (e.g., Besnier, 1995; Bledsoe & Robey, 1993; Bloch, 1993; Camitta, 1993; Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Kulick & Stroud, 1993; Jones, 2000; Lewis, 1993; Pitt, 2000; Probst, 1993; Rockhill, 1993; Shuman, 1986; Street, 1993, 1995) have begun broadening their fields of inquiry to acknowledge and describe the multiplicity of literacy events and practices in different cultures and social systems. The vast majority of these scholars are avowedly ethnographic in their approach.

Besnier (1995), for example, examines literacy on the Polynesian atoll of Nukulaelae and explores local social dynamics of letter writing and sermons. Analyzing these uses of literacy as elements of social life rather than mere applications of skill, Besnier demonstrates how literacy practices “interface” or “give meaning to [other social] practices and acquire meaning from them” (p. 187). Entwined in the social value of literacy on the atoll are issues of equality and inequality, gender, personhood, and affectivity. In a similar study, Kulick and Stroud (1993) investigate literacy meanings and uses in Gapun, a village in Papua, New Guinea. Their research explores the relationship between Catholicism, the institution that introduced western literacy to Gapun, and current conceptions and uses of literacy in the village. In contrast to traditional discussions of literacy that cast previously “nonliterate” societies as passive benefactors of western literacy campaigns, Kulick and Stroud demonstrate how Gapuners are active agents in the development and deployment of

their own uses of literacy. “The matter has not so much been one of literacy ‘taking hold’ of Gapun, as it has been of Gapuners seizing hold of those dimensions of literacy for which they consider they have the most use” (Kulick & Stroud, 1993, p. 55). In a shift from traditional models of literacy that focus solely on the impact of literacy on societies, Kulick and Stroud foreground the agency of a society’s members in constituting literacies.

Focusing on the role of social contexts in constituting literacies, Amy Shuman (1986) explores contexts and uses of literacy in her ethnography of narrative practices among inner-city high school students in the eastern United States. Canvassing the narrative uses of speech and writing among the students, Shuman explodes traditional notions of essential oral and textual features. The focus of her study is not the texts themselves but rather their uses and the social codes that allow for their (re)telling. In her research community, “the great difference between speaking and writing was not the kinds of thought demanded by either channel [the focus of much previous research on literacy], but in the contexts of use” (Shuman, p. 197). These contexts construct literacy’s meanings, and in turn these meanings construct contexts.

Through ethnographic studies such as these, NLS scholars have demonstrated that the technical, skill-based, deficit conception of literacy that continues to pervade popular, public and even academic discourse (Pardoe, 2000) is theoretically inadequate. As evidenced in this representative sample of research, literacy events and literacy practices “provide nodal points where there is a dialectic translation of micro-level knowledge, relationships and subjectivity, into macro-level regimes of truth, structural positioning and identity” (Maybin, 2000, p. 208). This translation occurs with situated variation for which a comprehensive explanatory model is needed. Such a model, which accounts not only for individual practices but also for crucial aspects

of structural positioning and identity, was developed from the ethnographic efforts of NLS researchers. This “ideological” (Street, 1993) model is discussed in detail below.

Ideological Model of Literacy

Street (1993, 1995) synthesizes the work of scholars that treat literacies as social practice into what he calls an “ideological model” of literacy—the theoretical center of NLS. The ideological model was developed in direct opposition to the traditional or “autonomous” model, as Street (1993, 1995) calls it, which focuses on the assumptions of the “literacy thesis” and “Great Divide,” as discussed above. In contrast to the autonomous model, which assumes “that literacy can be treated as a thing-in-itself, as an autonomous technology” (Collins, 1995, p. 78), the ideological model recognizes “the ideological and therefore culturally embedded nature” (Street, 1995, p. 29) of literacy practices, treating with skepticism “grand generalizations and cherished assumptions about literacy ‘in itself’” (Street, 1995, p. 29). While the autonomous model concentrates on the Anglo-European ideal of “essay-text” literacy (Scollon & Scollon, 1981), the ideological model emphasizes the diversity of sociocultural practices that involve reading and writing, often focusing on marginalized literacy practices (Pardoe, 2000). Street (1993) summarizes the model as follows:

I use the term “ideological” to describe this approach . . . because it signals quite explicitly that literacy practices are aspects not only of “culture” but also of power structures. The very emphasis on the “neutrality” and “autonomy” of literacy by . . . [proponents of the autonomous model] is in itself ‘ideological’ in the sense of disguising this power dimension. Any ethnographic account of literacy will, by implication, attest to its significance for power, authority and social differentiation. . . . This is to use the term “ideological” not in its old-fashioned Marxist (and current anti-Marxist) sense of “false consciousness”

and simple-minded dogma, but rather in the sense employed within contemporary anthropology, sociolinguistics and cultural studies, where ideology⁷ is the site of tension between authority and power on the one hand and resistance and creativity on the other (Bourdieu 1976; Mace 1979; Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1977; Asad 1980; Strathern 1985; Grillo 1989; Fairclough 1989; Thompson 1984). This tension operates through the medium of a variety of cultural practices, including particularly language and, of course, literacy. It is in this sense that it is important to approach the study of literacy in terms of an explicit “ideological” model. (p. 8)

Making explicit the ideological nature of literacy practices is a relatively new endeavor that has required students of literacy to reoconceptualize the boundaries of their fields of inquiry. In practical terms, Gee (1989) describes this reconceptualization:

Now one does not learn to read texts of type X in way Y unless one has had experience in settings where texts of type X are read in way Y. These settings are various sorts of social institutions, like churches, banks, schools, government offices, or social groups with certain sorts of interest. . . . One has to be socialized into a practice to learn to read texts of type X in way Y. . . . Since this is so, we can turn literacy on its head, so to speak, and refer crucially to the social institutions or social groups that have these practices, rather than to the practices themselves. When we do this, something odd happens: it turns out that the practices of such social groups are never just literacy practices. They also involve ways of talking, interacting, thinking, valuing and believing. Literacy practices are almost always fully integrated with, interwoven into, constituted part of, the very texture of wider practices

⁷ For an example of how ideology is traced in semiotic products, see Kroma and Butler Flora, 2003.

that involve talk, interaction, values and beliefs. You can no more cut the literacy out of the overall social practice, or cut away the non-literacy parts from the literacy parts of the overall practice, than you can subtract the white squares from a chess board and still have a chess board. (p. 27)

“Turning literacy on its head,” as Gee suggests, and acknowledging that literacy practices are always-already ideological is not simply a matter of descriptive significance. As we implicate social practices and institutions in our understanding of literacies and implicate literacies in our understanding of social practices and institutions, we locate the intersection of literacy and power. As Street (1999) explains, “Literacy practices are located not only within cultural wholes but also within power structures” (p. 57).

Since literacies embody ideology and power relations, cultural values, and social roles and are nurtured or imposed by particular groups and institutions, questions about acquiring, developing, and participating in literacy practices are necessarily complex, socio-political questions. To answer these questions, researchers must move beyond simply administering standardized assessments and compiling literacy rates to look more closely at the ways that particular literacy practices structure and are structured by the immediate and extended contexts of people’s lives. This type of analysis requires that we account for local meanings and uses of various literacies as well as the ways in which local meanings reproduce and/or resist larger norms and structures of power.

Acknowledging this reality, the ideological model addresses structures of power along two dimensions. First, the model makes evident on a macro-level the ways in which (as mentioned above)

the very assumptions about literacy—the models [e.g., the autonomous model] that people held underpinning their uses of literacy—[are] . . . sources of

power relations. If agencies and educational institutions could convince others that the only model of literacy was theirs—for instance, that literacy as an autonomous, neutral, and universal set of skills—then the particular cultural values that underpinned this surface neutrality could be sustained whilst not appearing to be so. (Collins & Blot, 2003, xiii)

Second, the ideological model ethnographically instantiates on a micro-level how “uses of literacy [are] to be seen as a way in which groups in society might exercise power and dominance over other groups, withholding or providing access to literacy for instance to chosen groups” (Collins & Blot, 2003, xiii).

Rockhill’s (1993) study of Hispanic immigrant women in the U.S. is an example of this type of micro-level analysis. Rockhill examines literacy practices among Hispanic women against the background of gender and immigration politics. Her data reveals that in their everyday practices, women in her research community rely more on written English than men do, who more frequently attend to practices that require spoken English. The distribution of these communicative practices among men and women depends heavily on rules of access. The particular literacy practices that women in her study engage in are associated primarily with the domestic sphere and usually exclude speaking English—a practice associated principally with the public sphere to which these women are generally denied access. Though these women may read and write more proficiently than their male counterparts, the literacy practices allotted to them have “a great deal to do with [their] silencing . . . their confinement to the domestic sphere, and the structure of work available to people who speak little English” (Rockhill, 1993, pp. 166–167). Rockhill’s analysis of power relations involved in local uses of literacy challenges liberal humanist notions that the acquisition of literacy in itself is an independent prerequisite to autonomy and social mobility. As Rockhill’s study demonstrates, “All literacies are potentially equal but for

social reasons are not actually so. Literacy is simultaneously both a potential liberator and a potential weapon of oppression” (Hornberger, 1999, p. 277).

This paradoxical reality—a theoretical maxim of the ideological model—is perhaps most salient in context of literacy instruction or literacy education. Arnove and Graff (1987) in an edited volume, for example, find significant historical evidence worldwide that over the past four centuries, large-scale literacy instruction “has been associated with major transformations in social structures and belief systems” (p. 4). However,

throughout history, the provision of literacy skills to reform either individuals or societies rarely has been linked to notions of people using these skills to achieve their own ends. To the contrary, reformers advocating the extension of education to the populace have attempted to restrict the ability to read to learning a particular text or doctrine. They commonly feared that unbridled literacy would lead people to new visions, to new ways of perceiving and naming the world that were not acceptable. (Arnove & Graff, p. 7)

Seeing how literacy instruction can be restricted to “a particular text or doctrine” is more difficult when using the lenses provided by the autonomous model of literacy. With its focus on commodified, transferable skill, the autonomous model assumes that the ability to decode and encode can be used by the learner in any context for any purpose:

Within the framework of the “autonomous” model of literacy the question for agencies and those conducting literacy campaigns becomes: how can people be taught to decode written signs, and for example, avoid spelling problems? This approach assumes that the social consequences of literacy are given—greater opportunity for jobs, social mobility, fuller lives, etc.—and that what agencies

need to do is to address the question of how literacy is to be imparted. (Street, 1995, p. 28)

Thus under the autonomous model, the neutral distribution of skill—the act of teaching/learning literacy—is ethically and politically unproblematic.

By contrast, the ideological model assumes that “there are other questions that need to be addressed prior to the apparently technical ones” (Street, 1995, p. 28). These questions center on literacy’s “significance for power, authority and social differentiation” (Street, 1999, p. 57). For proponents of this model, it is crucial to examine how literacy practices are being used/taught by whom they are being used/taught and for what purposes. The ideological model requires a power-sensitive “reading” of these practices that considers how ideology and power are used and distributed through literacy-based activities.

Pitt’s (2000) study of family literacy programs introduced by the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) in Great Britain is an example of this type of power-sensitive reading. In her study, she examines the teaching modules designed for parents in the program, identifying the voices that construct the content/methods of instruction. Pitt points out “which voices are stronger and dominate” (p. 108) and how these voices contribute to the distribution of power and social identity formation:

The texts and practices that the BSA choose to represent as a model of family literacy education provide a somewhat uneven “*foundation for reading and writing which can last a lifetime*” (BSA 1995b) [the program’s mantra]. The creative and problem-solving potential of literacy is restricted to the adults’ identity as parent; success in reading and writing as student is fenced in by school practices which control access to and ownership of texts and practices, and the adult as citizen and user of literacy in a pluralistic “information” society, is not part of the vision. The parents’ lives outside the classroom are

marginalised in the texts and practices of the . . . programmes, and this reduces opportunities to exploit the diversity of literacy practices which can be found in the home, and, . . . decreases the potential of this model of education to contribute towards a less hierarchical society. (Pitt, p. 122)

Through her exploration of power and social identity, Pitt highlights an important tenet of the ideological model: “the significance of the socialization process in the construction of the meaning of literacy for participants, . . . [and the concern] with the general social institutions through which this process takes place and not just the specific ‘educational’ ones” (Street, 1995, p. 29).

Moving beyond specific educational practices in the analysis of literacy makes evident the inadequacy of programs grounded in the autonomous model—“quick-fix literacy programs in which commodified literacy is peddled by entrepreneurs seeking to solve what they are calling the current reading crisis” (Larson, 2001, p. 1). Instead, “education becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of the lived culture of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical political positions” (Cervero & Wilson, 2001, p. 3). In this view, “education represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations” (Cervero & Wilson, p. 3). As Luke and Freebody (1997) explain,

By arguing that the contexts of literacy instruction are not “neutral,” we argue that in contemporary conditions the contexts of literacy events are not necessarily “level playing fields” where all learners have comparable access to resources, whether construed as access to representational systems and ideational means, linguistic knowledge, and cultural entry, and status. The *social* is thus defined as a practical site characterized by contestations over resources, representation and difference. These disputes over material and discourse resources are disputes over how and which forms of life are to be

represented, and whose representations of whom are to “count” with what material consequences for literacy learners. (p. 3)

Understanding the practice of literacy education as political terrain “opens up a potentially rich field of inquiry into the nature of culture and power, and the relationship of institutions and ideologies of communication in the contemporary world” (Street, 1995, p. 12). Indeed, the ideological model offers the possibility not only of understanding literacies in contemporary ideological regimes, but also understanding the regimes themselves—or what Gee (2000) calls “the whole configuration” (p. 194). He describes this analytical possibility and its implications for social change/justice work as follows:

[The ideological model] put[s] on display a myriad of elements . . . entering and exiting configurations amidst the enactive and recognition work of diverse people with sometimes conflicting and sometimes linked interests, values and goals. In every case, there is a special focus on the literacy bits in relation to everything else. “Literacy bits” are used almost like a radioactive isotope that allows bits and pieces of the whole configuration to be lit up, the better to find our way into the interlocking links among diverse elements that constitute the configuration. We can then study the human work it takes to get and keep these links forged, to destroy them, or to transform them. In every case, too, there is a focus on what is projected out in the world and the effects this project has on people’s lives and the implications it holds for social justice. (Gee, p. 194)

While “finding the interlocking links” is a central mandate of the ideological model, many NLS studies lack nuanced or comprehensive models of the social or of power relations to frame their discussions. Reflecting on this need for deeper exploration, proponents of the ideological model have admitted:

We felt that we should be braver—making our attacks on power structures more explicit—particularly with reference to institutional literacies. There is a need to work out how different literacies are situated in different social spaces within institutions and how literacy practices contribute to the (re)production of existing structures. . . . Discussing the ways by which to redress the inequity of dominant power structures, acknowledging and changing the environment of literacy studies and taking our theories forward all required that we look again at the spaces in which we worked and the spaces we needed to find.

(Tusting, Ivanic, & Wilson, 2000, p. 212)

To address the absence of fully theorized models of the social, recent developments in NLS (Collins & Blot, 2003; Street, 2003) point toward the importance of integrating general social theory more explicitly into the ideological model of literacy. Bartlett and Holland (2002), for example, “propose an expanded conception of the space of literacy practices, drawing on innovations in the cultural school of psychology, sociocultural history and social practice theory” (as cited in Street, 2003, p. 4). In particular they “characterize the relationship between social structures (history brought to the present in institutions) and ‘habitus’ (history brought to the present in person) and suggest ways in which NLS can adapt this approach. ‘Bourdieu’s theory suggests that we can analyze literacy events with an eye to the ways in which historical and social forces have shaped a person’s linguistic habitus and thus impinges upon that person’s actions in the moment’” (Street, 2003, p. 6).

Linking cultural/empirical understandings of literacy with sophisticated explanatory models of the social is particularly important in context of the globalizing forces of the contemporary politics that are shaping educational contexts today (Gee et al., 1996). As Jones (2000) argues in her study of Welch agriculturalists, “written texts and literacy practices are constitutive of the social practices of organisation and

control as they are realized by transnational bureaucratic systems” (p. 70). They are also “constitutive of the disembedding of local historic material processes and interpersonal relations which are a part of the globalisation of the contemporary social order” (Jones, p. 88). The conceptual union of the ideological model of literacy with theories for understanding contemporary social order provide the possibility of developing enhanced theoretical and practical implements for social change. Exploring the analytic potential of this linkage is a current trend in NLS (see Street, 2003, for a review), one that this study seeks to pursue.

Critiques of NLS

As the studies cited above indicate, much of the scholarly research in NLS to this point has centered on establishing the existence of multiple literacies and ethnographically describing these literacies in their cultural contexts. This research has been critiqued on three major levels—what Street (1996) calls “the three Rs”: relativism, romanticism and relevance” (as cited in Pardoe, 2000, p. 152). Pardoe summarizes these critiques:

First [NLS research] can be criticised for being apparently relativist about what counts as literacy, as if suggesting “anything goes.” Second, it can be criticised for appearing to romanticise low status literacies and unsuccessful writing, with the effect of maintaining the status quo (Street, 1996). Third, it can therefore be criticised for being apparently irrelevant to the main task of improving literacy standards and empowering people with the dominant discourses and genres. (p. 152)

Pardoe (2000) also sums up NLS responses to these critiques:

Street’s response is that, far from being relativist, NLS recognizes and addresses the issue that some literacies hold greater power and status in society, which is ignored in the monolithic view of literacy. . . . The relativism

of NLS, he argues, is only “at an analytic level” (1996, p. 5). . . . Equally his response is that, far from romanticising low-status literacies so as to maintain the status quo, NLS seeks to inform and pursue social change. He argues that far from being irrelevant, NLS research is actually far more effective in informing understanding, policy and pedagogy than research based on a monolithic view of literacy, for all the reasons . . . identified. (p. 153)

Perhaps more germane than the three R’s are specific methodological critiques related to the types of ethnographies of literacy produced to date. While ethnography has brought enhanced theoretical clarity, theory-building where culture and power are concerned may require more than micro-cultural analyses. Referring to critiques of NLS by Collins and Blot (2002) and Brandt and Clinton (2002), Street (2003) summarizes this insufficiency: “[Scholars] are concerned that, whilst NLS has generated a powerful series of ethnographies of literacy, there is a danger of simply piling up more descriptions of local literacies without addressing general questions of both theory and practice” (p. 4). Of particular concern is that idea that “situated accounts of literacies themselves embed the [traditional or autonomous] dichotomies, because they typically focus on uses of text and inscription, even if they question the assumptions of the literacy thesis. It is difficult to move from the relativist formulation that literacy is doing things with scripts to more general questions of what those things are” (Collins, 1995, p. 86). There is no question that “situated arguments about multiple literacies have carried the debate, [but] there remains the question of how to go forward, how to analyze the implications of literacies without buying into discredited teleologies or dichotomies” (Collins, p. 80).

To fully move beyond relativist formulations and old dichotomies, NLS must more actively engage “the problems of general social theory” (Collins, 1995, p. 87), as mentioned above. Since “historical and ethnographic cases are necessary but

insufficient for rethinking inherited viewpoints” (Collins & Blot, 2003, p. 5), new methodological lenses are needed to enhance our understanding of social literacies. These lenses must provide “a way out of the universalist/particularist impasse by attending closely to issues of text, power and identity” (Collins & Blot, as cited in Street, 2003, p. 4). Critics and NLS scholars (Collins & Blot; Street, 2003; Tusting et al., 2000) have called for more research that links the ideological model of literacy “to wider strands of social-critical work” (Collins & Blot, p. 4) including “Foucauldian notions of Discourse, Bakhtinian notions of intertextuality and work in critical discourse analysis” (Collins & Blot, p. 4). These links offer the possibility of analyzing how “literacy in use . . . serves multiple interests, incorporating individual agents and their locales into larger enterprises that play out away from the immediate scene” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 1). This type of analysis appears to be a significant new project in NLS (Street) to which this study, with its social-critical focus on the discursive construction of meaning, hopes to contribute.

Research Problem

Though the literate/illiterate divide has been forcefully deconstructed in literacy studies in recent years, it is “dying a relatively slow death” (Wagner, 1999, p. 5) in policy circles and in popular understanding. Many countries, for example, “still report data (then picked up by international agencies) in the dichotomous fashion of ‘literate’ versus ‘illiterate,’ often based on little more information than the number of children who have entered primary school” (Wagner, p. 5). Despite “substantial information on the inaccuracy of such statistics,” (Wagner, p. 5) literacy campaigns still use the illiterate/literate divide as a framework for designing programs and dispersing resources. Donor and lending agencies, such as the World Bank, “tend to offer loans only if certain types of educational initiatives are promoted and educational targets reached” (Wagner, p. 4). These targets, not surprisingly, are frequently framed

in statistics that are rooted in the long-standing literate/illiterate divide. In recent years, this divide has also fueled standardization and accountability movements, part of “a steadfast effort to restrict what ‘really counts’ as literacy” (Collins & Blot, 2003, p. 2). As policy and public discourse continue to reproduce the conceptual Great Divide, “the official story . . . [continues to be] optimistic about the transformative powers of literacy and education, perhaps the most durable element of an otherwise battered modern liberalism” (Graff, 1979, as cited in Collins & Blot, p. 7).

In the meantime, “educational researchers, policymakers, administrators, and teachers, struggling to deal with recent standardization and accountability pressures, focus primarily on improving achievement rather than critically examining the larger context that is motivating the drive for standardization” (Larson, 2000, p. 1). In the absence of this type of examination, the long-standing precepts of the autonomous model continue to govern our understanding and practice of literacy, resulting in material consequences for societies’ least powerful. When literate/nonliterate are the categories to which we assign people in an attempt to explain socio-political, cultural and economic conditions, we restrict our focus to the technical aspects of literacy—the level of skill at which someone becomes “literate.” In so doing, we often overlook the pressing social realities that permit and prohibit cognitive advance, access to resources/institutions and social change. Methodologies for examining, teaching, and funding literacy that result can be misdirected, narrow, or exclusionary.

Fortunately, through ethnographic perspectives informed by an awareness of power and ideology, studies in NLS (e.g., Jones, 2000; Pitt, 2000) have demonstrated “how individuals are inserted, through local activities, into broader regulating discourses” (Maybin, 2000, p. 205). We are learning, through this type of research, how these individuals and local activities “work”⁸ (Gee, 2000). However, there is still

⁸ I use the term “work” here as Gee (2000) does to refer to the “enactive” and “recognition” work done through various literacy practices. As Gee describes it,

much to be learned about how the “broader regulating discourses” (Maybin, p. 205) work: how macro-level, institutional ideologies are constructed to allow particular definitions of literacy and particular literacy practices to be “enacted” and “recognized.”

Moving beyond the study of “agents and their locales,” to examine “larger enterprises that play out away from the immediate scene,” (as called for in Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 1), this dissertation takes up the problem of how literacy is represented in large educational enterprises. The enterprise of interest here, which presumably would affect the practice of literacy in communities around the world, is the United Nations Decade of Literacy (1990–2000 and 2003–2012), a consolidated effort by UNESCO to accelerate global access to literacy education. To examine the “broader regulating discourse[s]” (Maybin, 2000, p. 205) of the Decade, this study analyzes UNESCO’s published “Plans of Action” in context of these over-arching research questions:

1. What models of literacy and literacy education are embedded in the policies and plans of the Decade? How are these models discursively constructed in the texts?
2. What political, economic and social agendas are being forwarded through the use of particular models of literacy and literacy education?

These questions guide a textual analysis aimed at connecting the larger theoretical issues of NLS discussed in this review to the discursive production of meaning that occurs in institutional literacy work. Far from merely a descriptive endeavor, this

Out in the world exist materials out of which we continue to make and remake our social worlds. The social arises when we humans relate (organize, coordinate) these material together in a way that is recognizable to others. We attempt to get other people to recognise people and things as having certain meanings and values within certain configurations or relationships. Our attempts are what I mean by “enactive work.” Other people’s active efforts to accept or reject our attempts—to see or fail to see things “our way”—are what I mean by “recognition work.” (p. 191)

study takes as a point of departure the notion that “the articulation of different discourses [are] centrally and dynamically interwoven in people’s everyday literacy activities Gee (2000)” (Street, 2003, p. 4). These activities and the discourses they enact have implications for the differential access to social and material resources.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological imperative of this dissertation, as mentioned in the introduction, is to alter “inequitable distributions of economic, cultural and political goods in contemporary societies” with the intention of bringing “a system of excessive inequalities of power into crisis by uncovering its workings and its effects through the analysis of potent cultural objects—texts—and thereby help in achieving a more equitable social order” (Kress, 1996, p. 15). The texts in question, UNESCO policy documents related to the Decades of Literacy (1990–2000 and 2003–2012), are analyzed here through the lens(es) of critical discourse analysis in order to address the research questions outlined above. This section of the dissertation will establish the epistemological rationale for employing CDA; briefly trace the intellectual roots of CDA; locate this dissertation among other critical discourse studies in the field of education; discuss the type of CDA that will be used in this study; outline relevant issues related to trustworthiness/validity; and discuss the dimensions of “new capitalism” (Fairclough, 2003; Gee et al., 1996), a central discourse in the UNESCO policy texts.

Epistemological Statement

While many research methodologies offer the possibility of investigating language through social lenses, I have chosen critical discourse analysis primarily because of its epistemological foundations. CDA, in contrast to other text-based approaches, includes in its methodological ontology the directive to address social inequality in any research-based activity (Hammersley, 1997; Kress, 1996). Gee (1999) explains this social change orientation as follows:

The fact that people have differential access to different identities and activities, connected to different sorts of status and social goods, is a root

source of inequality in society. Intervening in such matters can be a contribution to social justice. Since different identities and activities are enacted in and through language, the study of language is integrally connected to matters of equity and justice. (p. 13)

The epistemological point of departure of CDA is “an anti-objectivist view of knowledge” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 17), which is shared by other methodological traditions as well. What sets CDA apart, however, is not its opposition to positivism or objectivism, but rather its commitment to asking and answering social questions about inequality, power, and dominance. “Unlike other domains or approaches . . . CDA does not primarily aim to contribute to a specific discipline, paradigm school or discourse theory. It is primarily interested and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis” (Van Dijk, 2002, p. 107). CDA offers the possibility of and assumes responsibility for altering unequal or unjust discursive structures/practices—not simply for adding insight to a theory of language or to a substantive area of inquiry. As such, “critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large” (Van Dijk, p. 107).

The NLS-based theory of literacy, outlined in the introduction to this study, has rather transparent normative implications that encompass the political stance of this dissertation. This stance clearly resonates with a critical theory of discourse (and its attendant methods) that is employed in my analysis and explored in more detail below. This critical orientation challenges “conventional forms of research on two main grounds”:

- (a) For studying particular texts, settings or institutions without locating these in relation to the structure of the wider society. . . . It is argued that such an

approach ignores the ways in which the capitalist, sexist, and/or racist character of that society shapes all that goes on within it,

- (b) For claiming to be politically neutral when, in fact they rely on (usually implicit) assumptions about the nature of society that reflect the political beliefs, social location etc. of the researcher; and/or they have political consequences, and these serve effectively to reinforce ideology and support the status quo. (Hammersley, 1997, p. 239)

As an alternative to conventional forms of inquiry, a critical orientation to discourse analysis assumes that we can only understand society as a totality, that any particular phenomenon must be analyzed against the background of its wider social context:

1. that in producing knowledge of society critical research reveals what is obscured by ideology, such ideology being seen as pervasive and playing an essential role in preserving the status quo;
2. that a critical approach not only produces knowledge which enables us to understand how society *is* but also how it *can* and *ought to be*; that by acting on the basis of critical theory we can change the world for the better;
3. that the change produced will be fundamental in character, such as to eradicate oppression and emancipate . . . human beings. (Hammersley, 1997, p. 239)

This type of positionality, when acknowledged and fully explored, provides the possibility of enhanced methodological clarity, open dialogue, and clearly directed action. As Johnson et al. (2004) write:

The object of knowledge is not something that we find as an object, separate from ourselves. Our participation in our subject of research is, on the contrary,

inevitable. The particularity or even the partisanship of a research agenda is not, therefore, a disqualification for pursuing it. The primary methodological task is not to correct for bias in our research procedures. Rather, what Donna Haraway calls “partiality” is inevitable, for all approaches are partial, in the double meaning of the term—limited by a particular time, space and social horizon and also motivated, more or less consciously by desire, interest and power. Moreover, partiality is not only inevitable—a necessary human condition of knowledge production—it is also, potentially, a resource or asset, provided it is made explicit and debated and reflected on. As Haraway puts it in a beautifully condensed epigram: “the only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular.” (p. 17)

Critical Discourse Analysis Framework

CDA owes its theoretical heritage to a variety of disciplines, and as such, different accounts of the emergence of CDA privilege particular scholarly traditions in their historical analyses (see Luke, 1995; Rogers, 2004; Slembrouck, 2001). As one scholar puts it, CDA has undergone “multiple births and baptisms” (Slembrouck, p. 34). Generally speaking, however, CDA can be described as a “dialogue between critical social theory and linguistics” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 7) that took root in the 1980s among scholars in Europe (Slembrouck). The linguistic side of the tradition emerged in part from research in linguistic theory (Saussure, 1974, original 1959), literary theory (Bahktin, 1981, 1986), conversation analysis (e.g., Grice, 1999), interactional sociolinguistics (e.g., Labov, 1969), interethnic communication (e.g., Collins, 1989; Gumperz, 1982), ethnography of speaking (Hymes, 1974) and linguistic anthropology (e.g., Silverstein, 1996). These studies helped to lay the groundwork for

the emergence of critical linguistics (CL),⁹ (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Kress, 1985; Kress & Hodge, 1979) and systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1989, 1994; Halliday & Hasan, 1989), upon which significant strands of contemporary CDA are based, including the one used in this dissertation.

The social theoretical side of the dialogue draws on a number of philosophical traditions including Marxism, neo-Marxism, and post-structuralism. The analyses of culture, power, inequality, and dominance present in these theories provide the basis for the critical groundwork on which the linguistic analysis rests. Principal social theorists on the social theoretical side include Habermas (1984), Hall (e.g., 1981), Gramsci (1971), Althusser (1971), Williams (1977), Giddens (1984, 1991, 1993), Barthes (see, for example, 1967), Bourdieu (1991), and most especially Foucault (1971, 1977, 1978, 1980).¹⁰

Since “CDA represents an interdisciplinary theory and method” (Rogers, 2004, p. 252), “there are no set rules for conducting CDA” (Rogers, p. 253). Rather there are sets of theories/principles and “tools of inquiry” (Gee, 1999) from which the analyst can draw to examine texts and utterances. In this type of examination, critical discourse analysts emphasize to differing degrees the “critical,” the “discourse,” and the “analysis” aspects of their work. However, all three of these aspects—explored briefly below—must be present in any methodological application in order for it to be considered CDA (Rogers).

⁹ Critical linguistics and other linguistic traditions can and perhaps should be considered social theory. They are defined as linguistic theory here for organizational and heuristic purposes. In reality the dialogue between linguistics and social theory referred to above involves a blurring of boundaries between the two.

¹⁰ For reviews of literature relating to CDA, particularly in education, see Rogers (2003) and Luke (1995).

The Critical Aspect

The critical element of CDA, as it was originally applied to critical linguistics (CL) (Fowler et al., 1979), referred to a combination of contemporary Marxist, poststructuralist, and deconstructionist theory. Initial proponents of CL used the term “critical” in the general sense it was used in the Frankfurt school:¹¹

“Critique” . . . denotes reflection on a system of constraints which are humanly produced: distorting pressures to which individuals, or a group of individuals, or the human race as a whole, succumb in their process of self-formation. . . . Criticism . . . is brought to bear on objects of experience whose “objectivity” is called into question; criticism supposes that there is a degree of inbuilt deformity which masquerades as reality. It seeks to remove this distortion and thereby make possible the liberation of what has been distorted. Hence it entails a conception of emancipation. (Connorton, 1976, as cited in Fowler, 1996, p. 4)

As it is used in contemporary CDA, the term “critical” refers generally to the study of power relations (Rogers, 2004) and involves “the rejection of naturalism (that social practices, labels and programs represent reality), rationality (the assumption that truth is a result of science and logic), neutrality (the assumption that truth does not reflect any particular interests), and individualism” (Rogers, p. 3). Within CDA, the term “critical” also signals “an attempt to describe, interpret, and explain the relationship between the form and function of language. . . . Critical discourse analysts . . . start with the assumption that certain networks of form-function relationships are valued in society more than others” (Rogers, p. 4).¹² The task of the analyst then becomes to

¹¹ In contrast to the overdeterministic stance of traditional Marxism, however, the critical position of CDA “argues for a dialectic between individual agency and structural determinism” (Rogers, 2004, p. 3).

¹² For example, “the informal genre of storytelling combined with the anecdotal information a parent shares about their child as a reader at home carries less social value within the context of a Committee

make explicit the ways in which this stratification is achieved through the use of particular language-based structures and practices. In so doing, “CDA explicitly addresses social problems and seeks to solve social problems through the analysis and accompanying social and political action” (Rogers, p. 4). In some interpretations of the term “critical,” exposing issues of power and inequality through textual interpretation is merely the first step. The analyst must then “work from the analysis . . . to the social and political contexts in which the texts emerge” (Rogers, p. 4).

The Discourse Aspect

The “discourse” component of CDA refers to an understanding of language as socially constituted/constituting. While there is a broad range of definitions of discourse within the literature (see Luke, 1995; Rogers, 2003, 2004, for reviews), there seems to be general accord regarding discourse’s essential characteristics. In most cases, definitions of discourse used in CDA foreground the social, constructed/constructing, and political (i.e., concerned with power) elements of the semiotic/social and their interconnectivity. Fairclough (2003) generalizes the use of the term “discourse” in this way:

“Discourse” is used across the social sciences in a variety of ways, often under the influence of Foucault. “Discourse” is used in a general sense for language (as well as, for instance, visual images) as an element of social life which is dialectically related to other elements. “Discourse” is also used more specifically: different discourses are different ways of representing aspects of the world. (p. 215)

Fairclough’s basic definition here provides a functional foundation for conceptualizing discourse as a constructed, social phenomenon. His allusion to Foucault signals the

on Special Education (CSE) meeting than the formal genre of presenting test scores” (Rogers, 2004, p. 4).

ideological aspect of discourse, which Foucault explained in detail in his work. Luke (1995) summarizes Foucault's poststructuralist contribution to theories of discourse as follows:

Foucault described the *constructing* character of discourse, that is, how both in broader social formations . . . and in local sites and uses discourse actually defines, constructs, and positions human subjects. According to Foucault (1972, p. 49), discourses "systematically form the objects about which they speak," shaping grids and hierarchies for the institutional categorization and treatment of people. These knowledge-power relations are achieved, according to Foucault, by the construction of "truths" about the social and natural world, truths that become the taken-for-granted definitions and categories by which governments rule and monitor their populations and by which members of communities define themselves and others. (pp. 8–9)

Understanding how these taken-for-granted definitions are constructed and reproduced in and through texts/utterances is what a discursive treatment of language entails. In a discursive inquiry, the goal "is to denaturalize ideologies that have been naturalized" (Rogers, 2004, p. 252).

A discursive perspective also requires an acknowledgment "that all objects and actions are meaningful, and that their meaning is conferred by historically specific systems of rules." (Horwath, Norval, & Stavrakakis, 2000, pp. 2–3). These rules govern objects and actions of discourse and create the realities/truths/ideologies on which our understandings of the world are based:

Consider for instance a forest standing in the path of a proposed motorway. It may simply represent an inconvenient obstacle impeding the rapid implementation of a new road system, or might be viewed as a site of special interest for scientists and naturalists, or a symbol of the nation's threatened

natural heritage. Whatever the case, its meaning depends on the orders of discourse that constitute its identity and significance. In discourses of economic modernisation, trees may be understood as the disposable means for (or obstacles to) continued economic growth and prosperity, whereas in environmental discourses they might represent essential components of a viable eco-system or objects of intrinsic value and beauty. Each of these discourses is a social and political construction that establishes a system of relations between different objects and practices, while providing (subject) positions with which social agents can identify. In our example these subject positions might be those of “developers,” “naturalists,” “environmentalists,” or “eco-warriors.” (Horwath et al., pp. 2–3)

Using a discursive lens, as this example illustrates, involves more than linguistic or textual analysis. It requires that we account for the social, political, and ideological aspects of any semiotic product or interaction. Summarizing this conception of discourse within CDA, Gee (1996) explains:

1. Discourses are inherently ideological. . . . They crucially involve a set of values and viewpoints about the relationships between people and the distribution of social goods, at the very least, about who is an insider and who is not, often who is “normal” and who is not, and often, too, many other things as well.
2. Discourses are resistant to internal criticism and self-scrutiny because uttering viewpoints that seriously undermine them defines one as being outside them. The Discourse defines what counts as acceptable criticism.
3. Discourse-defined positions from which to speak and behave are not, however, just defined internally to a Discourse, but also as standpoints

taken up by the Discourse in its relation to other, ultimately opposing, Discourses.

4. Any Discourse concerns itself with certain objects and puts forward certain concepts, viewpoints, and values at the expense of others. In doing so, it marginalizes viewpoints and values central to other Discourses. In fact, a Discourse can call for one to accept values in conflict with other Discourses of which one is a member.
5. Discourses are intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society, which is why they are always and everywhere ideological. Control over certain Discourses can lead to the acquisition of social goods (money, power, status) in society. (as cited in Rogers, 2004, pp. 5–6)

Though Gee's principles may be articulated differently across individual studies, they generally pertain to any definition of discourse within CDA.

The Analysis Aspect

“Although there are many principles about discourse that unite the research of CDA,” such as those cited above, “there is also dissension within the community of CDA . . . oftentimes . . . around analytical procedures” (Rogers, 2004, p. 6). These differences usually revolve around the question of how much linguistic theory and how much social theory to integrate in an ideal analysis (Rogers). Some analyses, particularly those influenced by Foucault, focus heavily on social-contextual and historical factors, paying less attention to the linguistic detail of actual discursive interactions (Taylor, 2004). These studies (examples within education include Dawson, 2005; Donald, 1992; St. Clair & Sandlin, 2004) “describe and critique larger formations of statements across broad fields of institutional life” (Luke, 1995, p. 10), but “have difficulty showing how large-scale social discourses are systematically (or

for that matter, unsystematically) manifest in everyday talk and writing in local sites” (Luke, p. 11). By contrast, studies influenced heavily by linguistics (e.g., Krishnamurthy, 1996), “pay more attention to linguistic features of texts” (Taylor, 2004, p. 435), but “stop short of explicating how discourses evidenced in local contexts have political and ideological consequences” (Luke, p. 11).

Critical discourse analysts are attempting to reconcile the tension between macro and micro approaches (which is common to many methodologies) by exploring ways “to theorize and study the micropolitics of discourse, to examine actual patterns of language use with some degree of detail and explicitness but in ways that reconnect instances of local discourse with salient political, economic and cultural formations” (Luke, 1995, p. 11). Promising attempts have been made in what Fairclough (2003) calls “textually oriented discourse analysis,” which focuses systematically on linguistic features of texts with a recursive eye toward social theory. This type of “movement between linguistic and social analysis is what makes CDA a systematic method, rather than a haphazard analysis of discourse and power” (Rogers, 2004, p. 7).

Critiques of CDA

As with all methodological approaches, CDA has been critiqued on various grounds (Blommaert, 2001; Hammersley, 1997; Toolan, 1997; Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1998; Widdowson, 1998). Some of these critiques are technical, focusing, as mentioned, on the indeterminate amount of linguistic and social analysis that should be present in any given study, (Rogers, 2003) or the level of attention to accuracy and detail (Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1998). Other, more significant critiques, target the philosophical foundations of the methodology and converge around the concerns over CDA’s reflexive, self-explicating political position(s).

Among the most heated critiques of CDA are those that center on the methodology's rejection of positivism or objectivism. CDA's resistance to traditional epistemic positions has ironically been called "hegemonic" (Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1998), described as follows:

The really worrying thing about this movement [CDA] is its assumption of the high ground on moral issues. It is one thing to wish to change the world, another thing altogether for a small grouping of like-minded individuals to make that change "their ultimate aim" and to set themselves up as a kind of gatekeeper of the truth. . . . Being a critical discourse analyst does not and cannot qualify one individual to say what is right or wrong more than any other individual. We need above all to keep a critical eye on a movement whose adherents ("expert" or not) are often less interested in discovering the truth than in proclaiming it. (p. 1088)

In response to the critique that CDA does not seek to discover truth, Flowerdew (1998) positions CDA among other approaches to social-scientific inquiry, pointing out,

the applicability of scientific positivism, with its emphasis on predictability, measurement and precision as means of evaluating scientific facts has been questioned in the social sciences and humanities at least since Weber (1949). Whether it is social constructivism, post-modernism, phenomenology, or ethnography, research approaches in the social sciences and humanities in the last fifty years have been adapted towards an acceptance of ambiguity, imprecision, probabilistic interpretation and diversity of opinion. This has been necessary because the issues these disciplines deal with are resistant to objectivisation. (p. 1091)

Although there has been a general increased acceptance of ambiguity in the social sciences, CDA is still critiqued for the imprecision of its methodological agenda. Hammersley (1997), for example, suggests that CDA's critical foundations "are simply taken for granted, as if they were unproblematic. This reflects the fact that, in many ways, the term 'critical' has become little more than a rallying cry demanding that researchers consider 'whose side they are on'" (p. 244). The generic use of the term "critical" within CDA points to what Hammersley considers to be the methodology's greatest shortcoming: "the extraordinary ambition of the task it sets itself. Not only does it aim to offer an understanding of discursive processes, but also of society as a whole, what is wrong with it and how it should be changed. As a result, it faces all the difficult methodological problems with which more conventional forms of research have to deal, plus many others as well" (p. 245). Hammersley admits that "the failure to scrutinise philosophical presuppositions is a feature of many kinds of research" (p. 244), but because, in her view, critical discourse analysts argue for the superiority of their position, that defense does not hold.

Blommaert (2001) also critiques CDA for using terms and concepts in generic or underdeveloped ways. The consequences, he states, are seen in unsubstantiated analyses of social contexts and categories:

One of the most important methodological problems in discourse analysis in general is the framing of discourse in particular selections of contexts, the relevance of which is established by the researcher but is not made into an object of investigation. Part of this problem appears to be unavoidable: one always uses all sorts of presuppositions and assumptions, real-world and common-sense knowledge in analysis. . . . But this problem is especially pressing in the case of CDA, where the social situatedness of discourse data is crucial and where context is often taken to include broad systemic and

institutional observations. . . . In CDA, discourse is accompanied by a narrative on power and institutions, large portions of which are just copied from rank-and-file sources or inspired by received wisdom. . . . Thus in much CDA work, a priori statements on power relations are used as perspectives on discourse . . . and social-theoretical concepts and categories are being used in off-hand and seemingly self-evident ways. (p. 15)

Hammersley's and Blommaert's critiques may be valid when applied to CDA as a whole—when one generalizes about any methodological orientation, limitations become readily apparent. However, they can be satisfied in individual studies through careful attention to terminology, methodological scope, and claim-making. By specifying the use of particular terms and grounding analyses in empirically based discussions of social-theoretical concepts, analysts can avoid the underdevelopment or genericism targeted in these critiques. As for the ambition of the CDA agenda, individual studies should (and often do) make explicit the specific political agendas they are addressing. Still, critical discourse analysts would argue, the large scope of the over-arching political project speaks to the overwhelming need to adopt it, not abandon it. Besides, though CDA is still a somewhat marginalized methodology, critiques such as these speak to its viability as a research methodology (i.e., it has garnered enough attention to warrant analytical engagement from the outside).

CDA in Education Studies

In recent years, CDA has begun to take hold within the field of education, not simply as an alternative to traditional research methodologies, but as a necessary advance toward understanding issues of power, knowledge, and access that are intrinsic to educational endeavors. Luke (1995) explains:

The strength of critical discourse analysis lies in its capacity to show how the power relations of apparently mundane texts at work, to represent and interpret

instances of everyday talk, reading and writing, whether in a beginning reading lesson, a science discussion, a research seminar, a memo or policy statement, or a child/parent conversation in a shopping mall. Language, text, and discourse are not mere educational subfields or areas of interest. They are the very media by and through which teaching and learning and the very writing and discussion of research occur. Not only are there no spaces outside of the discourse, there are no means of educational description, classification and practice outside of discourse. . . . It is extremely risky to engage in the construction of texts of curriculum, educational policy, and research without some explicit reflexivity on how and who we construct and position in our talk and writing. For these reasons, a critical sociological approach to discourse is not a designer option for researchers but an absolute necessity for the study of education in postmodern conditions. (pp. 40–41)

Given this reality, educational researchers are beginning to use a variety of discourse-analytic approaches to explore various facets of curriculum, teaching/learning, and policy (see Luke, 1995, for a review).¹³ Literacy is a substantive area of focus within this trend, and not coincidentally, much of the research draws on NLS perspectives (e.g., Hamilton, 2000; Pitt, 2000; Rogers, 2003; St. Clair & Sandlin, 2004). Despite the proliferation of discourse-related research in education in general (and literacy studies in particular), studies that use critical, textually oriented approaches are rather uncommon. As Luke (1995) points out, “there is a good deal of Foucault-inspired talk about discourse in recent educational research, [but] instances in which it is translated into detailed analysis of discourse use in local sites . . . are few and far between” (p. 11). Rogers (2003) notes the following

¹³ Luke (1995) identifies the following substantive areas of discourse-related studies in education: education of women and girls; minority students; teacher education and the positioning of teachers and students; the construction of school knowledge and curriculum; educational data collection and analysis; and language and social relations in classrooms.

exceptions: Bergvall and Remlinger, 1996; Bloome and Power-Carter, 2001; Collins, 2001; Corson, 2000; Janks, 1997; Kumaravadivelu, 1999; Lemke 1995; Lewis, 2001; Luke and Freebody, 1997; Moje, 1997; Price, 1999; and Rogers, 2002. Two examples of studies that explicitly use models of CDA *and* draw on NLS perspectives are described below.

Rogers (2004) analyzes interviews of adult literacy students to take up the question: “What is the relationship between linguistic resources within and across contexts for an adult who has been labeled low literate?” (p. 53). Combining models of discourse from Fairclough and Gee, she examines informant responses to demonstrate “the ways in which changes in social identity styles or social languages are transformed within domains between the form and function of language” (Rogers, p. xiv). Her findings indicate that “despite proficiency and competency in a great number of contexts, adults (and children) often do not see themselves as competent and carry a negative sense of self, shaped by their history of participation with schools, into learning environments, shaping their own and their children’s education” (Rogers, p. 52). Through her analysis, she argues that CDA provides a “set of theories, methods and instructional interventions that allow educators to describe and explain how people can see themselves as proficient in one context and deficient in another” (Rogers, p. 53). Though she does not specifically refer to NLS in this study (she does in great detail elsewhere, e.g., 2003), her analytical categories are specific “literacy practices” (Rogers, p. 61), which bear out her NLS-driven conclusion: “[Literacy] learning is indeed a set of practices that involves activities and talk with concomitant shifts and changes across domains of interacting, representing, and being with such practices” (Rogers, p. 69).

Young (2004) also addresses issues of identity and literacy through a critical discourse analysis of constructions of masculinity. Again, through an adaptation of

Fairclough and Gee, she explores how, for one boy, “constructions of masculinity shaped . . . participation in school literacy practices and the way that school literacy practices and classroom contexts, in turn shaped . . . understandings of what it meant to be a boy in a literacy classroom” (Young, 2004, p. 148). Her analysis centers on texts produced by an 18-year old Hispanic boy and draws on the notion that “Discourses of masculinity interact with institutional and societal relations to negotiate and construct hierarchies and differences” (Young, p. 150). For Young, CDA opens the possibility of looking closely at the “ways that practices of masculinity and literacy are regulated and learned” (Young, p. 169). Young’s demonstration of how these literacy practices “interface” (Besnier, 1995) with other practices to construct identities and positions is an analytical stroke common in NLS.

In recent years, studies related to critical discourse analysis have become more prevalent in the field of adult education in general (e.g., Blunt, 2004; Dawson, 2005; Rogers, 2004; St. Clair & Sandlin, 2004; Sandlin, 2005). Blunt (2004), for example, examines conversations between university researchers managed by the National Literacy Secretariat of Canada. His analysis highlights how “discourses of specialized groups such as adult literacy researchers differ from those of literacy learners, instructors or business managers, and union leaders planning workplace literacy programs” (Blunt, p. 13). These discourses “inform different commonsense assumptions about people’s subjectivities and social roles” (Blunt, p. 14). His analysis “makes clear how power operates to position various discourses of literacy in policy debates such that certain dominant groups continue to disproportionately influence the policy formation process” (Blunt, p. 16). St. Clair and Sandlin (2004) also focus on literacy policy in their analysis of the term “illiteracy” in political discourse. Drawing on a lexical history of the term and using Even Start legislation as an example, the analysis points to the inherent deficit perspective in the use of the term. They conclude

that the term has become a metaphor for incompetence, justifying intervention in the lives of societies' least powerful. In a similar study, Dawson (2005) traces the use of the term "vocation" in adult education literature and demonstrates how it is a "significant key word wherein a range of different connotations and assumptions about the nature of work and the relationship between the domain of work and the practice of adult education are negotiated and contested" (Dawson, p. 220). Her examination of narratives of vocation in western culture "stands to challenge a political regime in which labor market meanings of work too often go uncritiqued and unquestioned" (Dawson, p. 229). Though Dawson's study and others do not all explicitly draw on the framework of critical discourse analysis, they indicate that the field of adult education may be increasingly aware of the implications of discourse in education work.

CDA of Education Policy

Policy studies in education have also experienced a recent trend toward critical theories of discourse. However, as Taylor (2004) points out, while some of these recent approaches draw on discourse theory (Ball, 1990; Taylor, 1997; Yeatman, 1990) "to suggest 'preferred readings' and likely effects of policy texts, most of the education policy analysis using discourse theory has not augmented social analysis with fine grained linguistic analysis."¹⁴ Consequently, there has been relatively little published work on policy analysis in education which specifically uses CDA" (p. 435). Recent exceptions include Blunt, 2004;¹⁵ Collins, 2001; Mulderrig, 2003; Taylor, 2004; and Woodside-Jiron, 2004.

Collins (2001), for example, examines the standards movement in the American educational system, analyzing advocacy documents, interview data and

¹⁴ As discussed above, St. Clair and Sandlin (2004) provide an example of how discourse theories are used in education policy studies without fine-grained linguistic analysis. See Dawson (2005) for a similar analysis.

¹⁵ Blunt (2004) is an example of CDA applied to literacy policy specifically. However, the analysis centers on policy dialogues rather than on policy documents.

journalistic reports. Using a “schematic synthesis” of Fairclough’s and Silverstein and Urban’s (1996) approaches, Collins argues that “paying detailed attention to the rhetoric of standards in key institutional texts . . . can provide insight into the interplay of the content of texts, the real and virtual patterns of interaction they occasion, and the more general discursive frames and social practices they evoke and instantiate” (p. 159). His findings identify “the new era of work”—“an elite political-discursive effort to hide the social fractures of a complacent late capitalism” (Collins, p. 159)—as the major trope underlying the discourse of standards in the U.S.

Taylor (2004) and Woodside-Jiron (2004) also use Fairclough’s approach to identify discursive patterns in policy texts. Taylor examines Education Queensland’s reform agenda in Australia to document how competing discourses are constructed in policy. Taylor traces “a subtle *discursive shift* in the policy implementation process, where social democratic discourses—especially the discourse of active citizenship—have become marginalized” (p. 445). The subtlety of the shift is due to the process of naturalization, a phenomenon that Woodside-Jiron (2004) highlights in her analysis of changes in California reading education policies. Naturalization occurs when ideologies and identities are discursively situated in a common sense format so that some are normalized and others are marginalized. “In the case of policymaking around reading in education, select policy players and policy informants took center stage while parents, teachers, administrators, taxpayers and students were pushed to the margin” (Woodside-Jiron, p. 202).

Studies like these and others related to education policy highlight important considerations related to the methodological boundaries and contributions of the foregoing study. Research on education policy abounds (journals include *Education Policy*, *Education Policy Analysis*, *Education Policy Issues*), and even critical studies of education policy are becoming more prolific (see *The Journal for Critical*

Education Policy Studies). However, there are important differences between (critical) policy analysis and critical discourse analysis of policy. Policy analysis can be broadly defined as “systematic inquiries intended to evaluate the consequences of alternative government decisions” (Guthrie, 1980, p. 41). The purview of policy analysis—even in critical policy studies—is largely on measurable predictors and outcomes in performance, pay, structure, cost, status, etc., related to education. These predictors and outcomes are the centerpiece of the analysis and are frequently articulated in positivistic terms.

In a discourse analysis of policy, by contrast, the focus is on the constitutive and reproductive elements and effects of discursive alternatives and discursive decisions. Here, discourse is broadly defined as “a theoretical horizon within which the being of objects is constituted” (Horwath, et al., 2000, p. 3). Discourse analysis of policy then “refers to the practice of analysing empirical raw materials and information as discursive forms,” (Horwath, et al., p. 3) not simply as variables or indicators of achievement or particular outcomes. From this perspective, policy-as-discourse becomes “systematically-organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution . . . [and] provide a set of possible statements about a given area, . . . organis[ing] and giv[ing] structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, or process is talked about” (Kress, 1985, as cited in Fowler, 1996, p. 7). As such, institutional values and meanings and their social/political implications become the central focus of the analyst.

Methodological Justification

Against the background of the methodological considerations outlined above, I have chosen to ground this study in a textually oriented (Fairclough, 2003) approach to CDA (or as an extension of critical linguistics and systemic-functional linguistics) for several reasons. First, the data consists of relatively brief, verbally compact policy

documents, which require a technical apparatus that allows for close linguistic scrutiny. Textually oriented approaches to CDA provide such an apparatus by allowing the analyst to break down large units of text into small units of analysis. These units then become the evidential basis for exploring larger linguistic and social issues. Second, this study does not provide a long-range historical view of the issues taken up. It examines in detail, rather, a relatively synchronic view of policy and discusses its implications for the socio-temporal present. With its close eye toward usage and micro-linguistic constructs, textually oriented CDA is particularly appropriate for this type of analysis-in-and-of-the-moment. Third, as a project in literacy studies, this dissertation ought, above all, to be a close and careful reading—an express goal of CL-based CDA.

From this category of CDA, I have chosen to primarily employ the methodological model of Norman Fairclough (2003), combining it with aspects of James Gee's (1999) model, which I rely on to a lesser degree.¹⁶ I draw on Fairclough because of his expertise in conceptualizing and providing analytical tools for the text-based examination of political/policy discourse. As the major founding figure in textually oriented approaches to CDA (Slembrouck, 2001), his commitment to developing a detailed, linguistically evidential understanding of the role of political discourse in regulating social life has generated a process of analysis that is

¹⁶ Gee (2004) explains the relationship and differences between his and Fairclough's approaches to CDA as follows:

Although Fairclough and I have been influenced by poststructuralist thought (e.g., Foucault, Bordieu, and Bakhtin) and neo-Marxist critical theory (e.g., Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1971), the linguistic side of Fairclough's work is based on (his own version of) a Hallidayan model of grammatical and textual analysis (Halliday, 1994)—a model more pervasive in England and Australia than in the United States. The linguistic side of my own work is based on (my own version of) American non-Hallidayan models of grammatical and textual analysis (e.g., Chafe, 1979; Givon, 1979) and sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974, 1981; Labov, 1972a, 1972b), combined with influences from literary criticism (e.g., Chatman, 1978). The two models are not incompatible, and the differences reflect differences in training and background and not (for the most part) principled disagreements. (p. 20)

particularly suited for the task at hand in this dissertation. Fairclough describes his understanding of political/policy discourse as follows:

Political discourse provides the clearest illustration of the constitutive power of discourse: It reproduces or changes the social world by reproducing or changing people's representations of it and the principles of classification which underlie them. . . . The power of political discourse depends upon its capacity to constitute and mobilize those social forces that are capable of carrying into reality its promises of a new reality, in its very formulation of a new reality. (as cited in Woodside-Jiron, 2004, p. 174)

In addition to his expertise in political discourse, Fairclough offers an open, multi-method approach with a wide range of analytical tools (discussed in detail below). As such, he provides ample technical opportunity to address a variety of issues in and across texts. Not coincidentally, his approach is popular among education theorists/practitioners who find value in linguistic analysis but whose disciplinary exposure to it is limited. Because of his founding role in establishing CDA as a field of inquiry, nearly all textually oriented approaches to critical discourse analysis in education draw on his model to some degree.

Though Fairclough's model is my primary resource for analysis, I also draw on methodological considerations provided by Gee (1999), though rather sparingly. I have chosen to draw on Gee because, among scholars in the field of education, he is perhaps the most prolific, practiced, and articulate advocate of critical discourse analysis.¹⁷ While his work is compatible with the theoretical and methodological

¹⁷ A linguist by training, he has done much to infuse the study of education with key ideas from a variety of disciplines concerned with language and social life. As Collins (2004) writes,

A very influential strand in education-related critical discourse analysis is the work of James Gee. . . . His framework features an unusual synthesis of insights from formal and functional linguistics, cognitive sciences, postmodern literary theory and more work-a-day historical and sociological research on society, schooling and literacy. His work offers a range of creative, shrewd analyses of policy documents, stories, videos games, and found texts. (p. xiii)

topography of critical language studies in general, Gee's substantive areas of inquiry are most often related to education or have clear educational implications. It is evident when reading Gee's work that his theories of discourse arise in the wake of everyday educational practice and return to inform that practice dialectically. Perhaps more important, Gee's educational expertise centers specifically on literacy. As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, he is widely considered to be among the pioneering scholars of New Literacy Studies—his most influential theories of discourse were preliminarily outlined in his work on literacy (1989). Since the theoretical framework for this paper grounded in NLS, it is fitting that my analysis rely on Gee's methodology to some degree.

Since I am cutting my discourse-analytic teeth on this study, I am relying at one level on the expertise of other analysts who have chosen to use a combination of Gee and Fairclough as well (e.g., Rogers, 2003, 2004; Taylor, 2004; Woodside-Jiron, 2004). However, my particular combination of their models—which privileges Fairclough's approach—has been fashioned specifically for the research issues of this dissertation, and as such, should not be considered a methodological replica of previous studies. In the section that follows, I describe specific elements of each model I use in the analysis and why I combine them in particular ways.

Key Methodological Definitions

“One of the main purposes of critical language studies is to denaturalize everyday language, that is, to make sensible and available for analysis everyday patterns of talk, writing and symbolic exchange that are often invisible to participants. To do this requires a specialized language for talking about texts” (Luke, 1995, p. 12). While many critical discourse analysts have elements of this specialized language in common, the definitions and significance of particular terms they use vary somewhat across analytical models. That being the case, I pay particular attention here to specific

definitions of key terms as I outline the tenets of Fairclough's and Gee's models. These terms are used throughout the dissertation to signal particular ways of understanding the objects and processes of analysis. For heuristic purposes, I outline separately the aspects of Gee's and Fairclough's models that have relevance to my study, then present the particular hybrid of their models that I will use in this dissertation.

Gee's Model

Gee's (1999) approach to CDA is grounded in a conception of communication in which the two interconnected primary functions of language are "to scaffold the performance of social activities (whether work or play or both) and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions" (p. 1).¹⁸ Located within this conception of language are a series of interdependent analytical categories or "tools of inquiry," as Gee calls them, for understanding how language is discursively related to social life. Among the most important of these tools is the analytical

¹⁸ Central to the process of scaffolding are six major "building tasks," (Gee, 1999) which listeners and readers ("in collaboration with others in an interaction") (Gee, p. 85) participate in through the use of grammatical cues and clues (Gumperz, 1982). The six building tasks are:

1. Semiotic building, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what semiotic (communicative) systems, systems of knowledge, and ways of knowing, are here and now relevant and activated.
2. World building, that is using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what is here and now (taken as) "reality," what is here and now (taken as) present and absent, concrete and abstract, "real" and "unreal," probable, possible and impossible.
3. Activity building, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what activity or activities are going on, composed of what specific actions.
4. Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what identities and relationships are relevant to the interaction, with their concomitant attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing and believing, as well as ways of acting and interacting.
5. Political building, that is, using cues or clues to construct the nature and relevance of various "social goods," such as status and power, and anything else taken as a "social good" here and now (e.g., beauty, humor, verbalness, specialist knowledge, a fancy car, etc.).
6. Connection building, that is, using cues or clues to make assumptions about how the past and future of an interaction, verbally and nonverbally, are connected to the present moment and to each other—after all, interactions always have some degree of continuous coherence. (Gee, 1999, pp. 85–86)

category of Discourse (with a capital “D”) as distinguished from discourse (with a lower-case “d”). Gee’s conception of Discourse underlies, in part, my analysis.

Making visible who we are and what we are doing always involves a great deal more than “just language.” It involves acting-interacting-thinking-valuing-talking-(sometimes writing-reading) in the “appropriate way” with the “appropriate” props at the “appropriate” times in “appropriate” places. Such socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting, in the “right” places and at the “right” times with the “right” objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or “social network”), I will refer to as “Discourses,” with a capital “D” (Gee 1990b, 1992, 1996; see also Bourdieu 1990b; Foucault 1985). I will reserve the word “discourse,” with a little “d,” to mean language-in-use or stretches of language (like conversations or stories). (Gee, 1999, p. 18)

As Gee (1999) is apt to do, he uses metaphors to illustrate in more detail his use of the term.

One way to think about the role of Discourses is this: Imagine you have a giant map. Each Discourse is represented on the map like a country, but with movable boundaries that you can slide around a bit. You place the map on top of any language, action or interaction you participate in or want to think about. You move the boundaries of the Discourse areas on the map around in negotiation with others or as your reflections change. The map gives you a way to understand what you are seeing in relationship to the full set of Discourses in an institution . . . or the society as a whole. (p. 22)

He further explains,

Discourses are out in the world and history as coordinations (“a dance”) of people, places, times, actions, interactions, verbal and nonverbal expression, symbols, things, tools, and technologies that betoken certain identities and associated activities. . . . Like a dance, the performance here and now is never exactly the same. It all comes down, often, to what the “masters of the dance” will allow to be recognized or will be forced to recognize as a possible instantiation of the dance. . . . Thus they are material realities. But Discourses also exist as the work we do to get people and things recognized in certain ways and not others, and they exist as maps that constitute our understandings. They are, then, social practices and mental entities, as well as material realities. (Gee, 1999, pp. 19, 23)

To explain how Discourses work as an analytical category, Gee provides a set of principles or maxims for examining texts/language:

1. Discourses can split into two or more Discourses. . . .
2. Two or more Discourses can meld together. . . .
3. It can be problematic whether a Discourse today is or is not the same as one in the past. . . .
4. New Discourses emerge and old ones die all the time. . . .
5. Discourses are always defined in relationships of complicity and contestation with other Discourses, so they change when other Discourses in society emerge or die. . . .
6. Discourses need, by no means, be “grand” or large scale.
7. Discourses can be hybrids of other Discourses. . . .
8. There are limitless Discourses and no way to count them, both because new ones, even quite non-grand ones, can always emerge and because boundaries are always contestable. (Gee, 1999, p. 22)

These principles provide an analytical foundation for identifying how Discourses are constructed and how they operate in specific, situated contexts. Instantiations of Discourses are present all around us, and as Gee (1999) states, “It is sometimes helpful to think about social and political issues as if it is not just us humans who are talking and interacting with each other, but rather, the Discourses we represent and enact, and for which we are ‘carriers’” (p. 18).

In the context of Gee’s understanding of Discourse, the additional analytical category of “situated meaning” is particularly relevant to my analysis. Situated meaning “is an image or pattern that we assemble ‘on the spot’ as we communicate in a given context, based on our construal of that context and on our past experiences” (Gee, 1999, p. 47). In contrast to traditional models of communication that teach that the communicative mind operates using “highly general or decontextualized *rules*,” the notion of situated meaning teaches that “the mind operates with (flexibly transformable) patterns extracted from experience” (Gee, p. 48). That is to say,

The mind is no longer viewed as a rule-following logic-like calculator. In fact, the human mind does not deal well with general rules and principles that do not come out of and tie back to real contexts, situations, practices, and experiences. It is crucial, however, to realize that the patterns most important to human thinking and action follow a sort of “Goldilocks Principle”: they are not too general and they are not too specific. Situated meanings are *mid-level patterns or generalizations* between these two extremes. (Gee, p. 48)

Situated meanings account for the specific context in which a term is used and also the broad, shared contexts that it “typically” inhabits. These meanings signal “how to move back and forth between language and context (situations)” and are “not signals of fixed and decontextualized meanings” (Gee, 1999, p. 85). Discourse analysis crucially involves assembling “cues or clues” (Gee) to determine situated meanings.

Fairclough's Model

Fairclough's model of discourse analysis is rooted in a conception of language that is similar to Gee's: "Social structures define what is possible, social events constitute what is actual, and the relationship between potential and actual is mediated by social practices. Language (more broadly semiosis) is an element of the social at each of these levels" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 223). Within and across these levels, critical discourse analysis "oscillat[es] between a focus on specific texts¹⁹ and a focus on . . . 'the order of discourse,' the relatively durable social structuring of language which is itself one element of the relatively durable structuring and networking of social practices" (Fairclough, p. 3). According to Fairclough, the "key semiotic aspects associated with networks of social practices are genres, discourses and styles" (Taylor, 2004, p. 437). They are understood in his (2003) model as follows:

A genre is a way of acting and interacting linguistically—for example, interview, lecture and news report are all genres. Genres structure texts in specific ways. . . . The nature of semantic and grammatical relations between sentences and clauses depends on genre . . . , as do the type of "exchange" (e.g., giving information, eliciting action), speech function (e.g., statements, offers, demands) and the grammatical mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative). (p. 17)

A discourse is a particular way of representing some part of the (physical, social, psychological) world—there are alternative and often competing discourses, associated with different groups of people in different social positions. Discourses differ in how social events are represented, what is excluded or included, how abstractly or concretely events are represented, and

¹⁹ Fairclough (2003) defines text as "any actual instance of language in use" (p. 3).

how more specifically the processes and relations, social actors, time and place of events are represented. (p. 17)²⁰

[Styles are concerned with] text as identification, i.e., texts in the process of constituting the social identities of the participants in the events of which they are a part. One aspect of identification is what people commit themselves to in what they say or write with respect to truth and with respect to obligation—matters of “modality.” Another is evaluation and the values to which people commit themselves. (p. 17)

Taylor (2004) summarizes Fairclough’s use of these terms as follows:

Genres—ways of (inter)acting or relating, interactions

Discourses—ways of representing, representations, and

Styles—ways of being, identities.

It is important to note that these concepts are dialectically related: “discourses are enacted in genres, discourses are inculcated in styles, actions and identities are represented in discourses” (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 19–20). The semiotic aspect of the social order is an *order of discourse*, which Fairclough (2001) describes as “the way in which diverse genres and discourses are networked together” (p. 437).

The over-arching categories of genre, discourse, and style organize analytic features of texts that help researchers identify particular discursive structures and moves. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have chosen from among these features (or categories) those (listed and defined below) that are particularly useful in the

²⁰ Fairclough (2003) further explains,

I see discourses as ways of representing aspects of the world—the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the “mental world” of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world. . . . Different discourses are different perspectives on the world, and they are associated with the different relations people have to the world, and the social relationships in which they stand to other people. Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions. . . . Discourses constitute part of the resources which people deploy in relating to one another, cooperating, competing, dominating—and in seeking to change the ways in which they relate to one another. (p. 124)

context of my research questions. Their particular applications to my study are explained in the next section of the paper.

Assumptions: Implicitness is a pervasive property of texts, and a property of considerable social importance. All forms of fellowship, community and solidarity depend upon meanings which are shared and can be taken as given, and no form of social communication or interaction is conceivable without some such “common ground”. On the other hand, the capacity to exercise social power, domination and hegemony includes the capacity to shape to some significant degree the nature and content of this “common ground,” which makes implications and assumptions an important issue with respect to ideology. . . . [According to Fairclough, there are three main types of assumptions]: existential assumptions: assumptions about what exists; propositional assumptions: assumptions about what is or can be or will be the case; [and] value assumptions: assumptions about what is good or desirable. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 55)

Dialogicality: In Bakhtin’s view of language, which is taken up within critical discourse analysis, all texts . . . are dialogical, i.e., they set up in one way or another relations between different “voices”. But all texts are not equally dialogical. Dialogicality is a measure of the extent to which there are dialogical relations between the voice of the author and other voices, the extent to which these voices are represented and responded to, or conversely excluded or suppressed. This aspect of texts can be approached through distinguishing various orientations to difference. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 214)

Equivalence and Difference: Social processes of *classification* can be seen as involving two simultaneous “logics”: a logic of difference which creates differences, and a logic of equivalence which subverts differences and

creates new equivalences. This process can be seen as going on in texts: meaning-making involves putting words and expressions into new relations of equivalence and difference. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 215)

Modality: The question of modality can be seen as the question of what people commit themselves to when they make Statements, ask Questions, make Demands or Offers. The point is that there are different ways of doing each of these which make different commitments. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 165)

The modality of a clause or sentence is the relationship it sets up between author and representations—what authors commit themselves to in terms of truth or necessity. Two main types of modality are distinguished, epistemic modality (modality of probabilities), and deontic modality (modality of necessity or obligation). (Fairclough, 2003, p. 219)

Naturalization: [Naturalization refers to] the ways in which text was structured to ensure particular interpretations. . . . Analyzing this process of naturalization in the structural analysis of text, we come to understand the ways in which ideologies are embedded in discursive practices and made more effective by becoming naturalized. When this happens, the ideologies and discourse practices attain the status of common sense and become difficult to recognize or push against. (Woodside-Jiron, 2004, p. 200)

Recontextualization: Recontextualization is a relationship between different (networks of) social practices—a matter of how elements of one social practice are appropriated by, relocated in the context of, another. Originally a sociological concept (Bernstein 1990), it can be operationalized in discourse analysis in a transdisciplinary way through categories such as genre chain, which allow us to show in more detail how the discourse of one social

practice is recontextualized in another (Bernstein, 1990; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). (Fairclough, 2003, p. 222)

Nominalization: Nominalization is a type of grammatical metaphor which represents processes as entities by transforming clauses (including verbs) into a type of noun. . . . Nominalization often entails excluding social agents in the representation of events. . . . It is a resource for generalizing and abstracting which is indispensable in, for instance, science, but can also obfuscate agency and responsibility. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 220)

Lexical Metaphors: Discourses are differentiated by [lexical] metaphor . . . [in which] words which generally represent one part of the world [are] extended to another. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 131)

The list of features above converge analytically around Fairclough's concern with "the interdiscursive character of a text (the particular mix of genres, discourses and styles). [This character is] realized in semantic, grammatical and lexical (vocabulary) features of the text at various levels of text organization" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 67). Fairclough's model looks at "texts dynamically, in terms of how social agents make or 'texture' texts by setting up relations between their elements" (Fairclough, p. 12). This type of analysis allows researchers to "attribute causal effects to linguistic forms, but only through a careful account of meaning and context" (Fairclough, p. 13). Moreover, "these social scientific categories, unlike practical categories, allow particular texts to be seen in relation to elaborated general theories" (Fairclough, p. 15). Still, Fairclough cautions, "if we assume that our knowledge of texts is necessarily partial and incomplete . . . and if we assume that we are constantly seeking to extend and improve it, then we have to accept that . . . [these] categories are always provisional and open to change" (Fairclough, p. 15).

Hybrid Model

As mentioned above, this dissertation combines elements of Fairclough's (2003) and Gee's (1999) methodological models to create a framework for analyzing UNESCO "Plans of Action" for the Decades of Literacy 1990–2000 and 2003–2012.²¹ What I take from Gee is his practical understanding of the analytic category of Discourse, which complements Fairclough's. I also draw specifically on Gee's notion of "situated meaning" and use it as a "tool of inquiry" (Gee) in my analysis to understand the lexical operations in the texts.²² I integrate these tools into Fairclough's overall framework, as described above, from which I have chosen linguistic categories that are particularly relevant to the analysis of policy. The analysis bears out this relevance more clearly than an acontextual discussion of the categories could do here. As such, they are explained in more detail as particular findings are discussed. Because Fairclough and Gee are both concerned with new capitalism as a research theme, their work (specifically Fairclough, 2003; Gee et al., 1996) also informs the social theory present in my analysis. This framework is designed around my overarching research questions:

What models of literacy and literacy education (or service delivery) are embedded in the policies and plans of the respective Decades? How are these models discursively constructed in the texts? What political, economic and social agendas are being forwarded through the use of these particular models?

Since these are essentially questions of representation, and because "discourses are distinguished [in part] . . . by their ways of representing" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 129), this study is concerned with discourses as a broad unit of analysis. That is to say, the

²¹ In a few instances, I also draw on general linguistic theories to explain particular grammatical moves in the texts. References to these theories are found in the analysis.

²² I integrate this tool in particular into my framework because a discrete equivalent category is not readily available in Fairclough's model. The idea of "situated meanings" is useful because the starting point of my analysis is lexical. The notion of situated meaning allows me to operationally "define" important features of the policies' lexicons.

study identifies what discourses operate in the construction of literacy and literacy education in the policies and how they operate to advance certain ends. To identify these discourses, however, I focus my analysis on “a range of linguistic features which can be seen as realizing a discourse” (Fairclough, p. 129). These linguistic features are the fine-grained units of analysis that signal the operation of the particular discourses in question.

My analytical process begins with the notion that “the most obvious distinguishing features of a discourse are likely to be features of vocabulary” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 129)—“discourses ‘word’ or ‘lexicalize’ the world in particular ways” (Fairclough, p. 129). As such, the analysis pays particular attention to (dis)continuities in lexical choice (relating to count, collocation and accompanying semantic structures), with the understanding that they signal important discursive moments.²³ In so doing, the study demonstrates how specific discourses perform lexical tasks within these moments to promote and subvert particular constructs of literacy. Building on this lexical examination, the analysis also highlights grammatical and semantic structures/patterns that indicate the operation of specific discourses.

The identification of relevant linguistic features, or the “social-scientific categories” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 15) of my analysis, allows the study to connect to “elaborated general theories” (Fairclough, p. 15) of the social. These theories offer explanations of the particular representations of aspects of the world that linguistic

²³ Like Dawson (2005), my approach reflects ideas of the English cultural critic Raymond Williams’s (1976) writing about vocabulary as a source of insight into the structures of meaning built into our sense of the everyday: For Williams and others (Bourdieu, 1991; Fraser & Gordon, 1994), particular words and expressions often become emblems of symbolic power where tacit assumptions about social experience are embedded and contested. By examining the trends associated with changing usage over time, it is possible to get a sense of changing worldview and the inevitable inconsistencies and ambiguities that go along with such changes. With the study of vocabulary, “We find a history and complexity of meanings . . . [where] words which seem to have been there for centuries, with continuous general meanings, have come in fact to express radically different or radically variable, yet sometimes hardly noticed, meanings and implications.” (Williams, 1976, p. 15, as cited in Dawson, p. 222)

mechanisms evidence. In my analysis, general social theories are taken from research that connects closely to the discourses in question, specifically the “ideological” (Street, 1993) discourse on literacy, reflecting ideas taken from New Literacy Studies and the discourse of “new capitalism,” (e.g., Fairclough, 2003; Gee et al., 1996), reflecting research on contemporary trends of economic globalization. This research provides a set of “indicators,” (see Tables 1 and 2 in the “Policy Overview” section), discussed in detail in the analysis, for recognizing significant linguistic/discursive patterns in the texts; these patterns in turn point dialectically to social theories that are relevant. Using my research questions as a point of departure, then, I approached the analysis of the policy documents through: 1) multiple global readings and codings to identify macro-level generic, stylistic, and discursive (see Fairclough, 2003) structures; (2) multiple close readings and codings of the documents to identify constitutive features of macro-level structures; and (3) multiple connective readings and codings of the documents to identify potential relationships between micro- and macro-level linguistic structures and social theories. Since Fairclough’s textually-oriented model of CDA “is profoundly concerned with the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social life, and its approach to the linguistic analysis of texts is always oriented to the social character of texts” (Fairclough, p. 5), I “oscillate” (Fairclough) rather organically between the linguistic and the social in these readings. As such, discussions of social theories and linguistic mechanisms are interwoven closely throughout my analysis.²⁴

²⁴ Because CDA is not a traditional form of social–scientific inquiry, issues of trustworthiness (or what other approaches refer to as validity) are particularly salient. Indeed, the very definition of discourse presupposes multiple readings and interpretations, which presents obvious difficulties when the goal is systematic social–scientific inquiry. Luke (1995) summarizes the issue in this way:

The risk is that the poststructuralist move in discourse analysis and social theory, with a deliberate strategy of enfranchising all voices, readings and interpretations and of encouraging and opening out a textual “play of difference,” might lead to acritical pluralism and relativism. . . . If indeed we take the position that everything is discourse—that meaning is always deferred, that all texts are polysemous (i.e., have multiple meanings), that to privilege any particular reading or interpretation of texts or the world is potentially authoritarian, and

In my analysis, I chose to focus on discourses related to New Literacy Studies because my research problem/questions center on understanding how models of literacy operate in the policy documents to advance certain agendas. NLS provides the well-theorized models of “ideological” and “autonomous” that allow analysts to observe how operationalizing certain constructions of literacy leads to certain material and social consequences. I focus on the discourse of “new capitalism” because as Fairclough (2003) states: “a great deal of contemporary social research is concerned with the nature and consequences of [new capitalism]. . . . And, quite simply, because no contemporary social research can ignore these changes, they are having a pervasive effect on our lives. A more specific reason for focusing on new capitalism is that this is now developing into a significant area of research for critical discourse analysts” (p. 4). Perhaps more important, looking at the discourse of new capitalism and the ideological discourse on literacy simultaneously answers important recent calls for research. As mentioned above, critics of NLS and NLS scholars (Collins & Blot, 2003; Street 2003; Tusting et al., 2000) have called for more research that links the

thus, that “truth,” and “reality” is possible—then all meanings begin to assume equal plausibility and value. The danger here is that this vantage point on discourse removes substantive normative grounds for ascertaining the value and material effects of a particular text. Even where its intent is to enfranchise marginal voices, it has the potential to conceal operational relations of power. These are ongoing and knotty theoretical problems. (p. 19)

In order to address these theoretical problems, analysts have developed criteria for judging the “validity” of a particular analysis. Gee (1999) explains these criteria as follows:

Validity does not consist in how any one tool of inquiry works on its own. Rather, validity primarily consists in how our various tools of inquiry work together. What we test when we worry about why we should trust an analysis of some data is not each claim or the result of each tool separately. We test the whole analysis in terms of how much data it covers, how well it works on new sources of data, how much agreement we can gather from others, how well tied the analysis is to a wide variety of linguistic details, and whether or not there are competing analyses that work better in any or all these respects than ours. (p. 7)

“Validity is social not individual” (Gee, p. 95). “Empirical science is social and accumulative in that investigators build on each other’s work in ways that in the long run, we hope, improves it” (Gee, p. 95). Given this view of validity as social, important considerations for judging the trustworthiness of this study will be the degree to which it (a) logically and cogently builds on the theoretical framework of NLS, identifying and explicating in the analysis issues brought to the forefront by other NLS studies; (b) builds methodologically on other education policy work in CDA, answering logically key questions of Fairclough’s/Gee’s frameworks; and (c) opens viable possibilities for other researchers to build theoretically and methodologically on it.

ideological model of literacy “to wider strands of social-critical work” (Collins & Blot, p. 4) including “Foucauldian notions of Discourse, Bakhtinian notions of intertextuality and work in critical discourse analysis” (Collins & Blot, p. 4).

In assembling relevant social theory for my analysis, I draw on the literature review in the introduction of this dissertation to identify the features of the ideological discourse on literacy. To identify features of new capitalist discourse, I draw on the discussion below, which presents a general definition of new capitalism and outlines key aspects of its discursive manifestations. In presenting this definition, I employ perspectives from a group of scholars (Fairclough, 2002, 2003; Gee et al., 1996; Graham, 2001, 2002; Jessop, 1997a, 1998, 2000, 2001; Lankshear, 1997) who treat new capitalism not simply as an economic phenomenon, but also as a discourse, generally taking a critical orientation to it. Because their work exhibits a high degree of cross-pollination, it provides a coherent analytic lens through which to examine the texts in question.²⁵

New Capitalist Discourse

The term “new capitalism,” as it is used here, refers to “the most recent of a historical series of radical re-structurings through which capitalism has maintained its fundamental continuity (Jessop, 2000)” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 4). Other terms used elsewhere that encapsulate various aspects of this restructuring include “the new era of work” (e.g., Collins, 2001), “new work order” (Gee et al., 1996), “new economy” (e.g., Graham, 2001), “globalization” (e.g., Fairclough, 2003), “post-Fordism” (e.g., Jessop, 2000), and neo-liberalism. Despite differences between each of these rubrics—a thorough discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper—they all generally

²⁵ For clarity here, I rely heavily on the scholars’ own words. The discussion that follows provides a general context for understanding new capitalism; specific features of the discourse are discussed in more detail in my analysis.

point to the “re-structuring and re-scaling of social relations in accordance with the demands of unrestrained global capitalism” (Fairclough, p. 4).

“To appreciate what, if anything is ‘new’ about the new capitalism, and to get angles on the significance of the relationship between language and the new capitalism,” as Lankshear (1997) explains, “it is helpful to begin with some general comments about capitalism per se”:

In broad terms, capitalism may be understood as a system which uses wage labour to produce commodities for sale, exchange, and for generating profit, rather than for the meeting the immediate needs of the producers. As such, the distinction between use value (X’s value comes from using it) and exchange value (its value is for exchange and what we can get for it) is fundamental.

Capital²⁶ is seen as one of four main production factors, the others being land, labour, and enterprise. Capital consists of such things as machinery, infrastructure/plant, tools and technologies, other human creations (from ideas to exchange media like money, synthetics, etc.) that are applied to the production process. Capital is used to purchase commodities—raw materials and labour, mainly—in order to produce commodities for sale at a profit; which profit is turned back into capital: the process of capital accumulation. Of course, this highly general notion of capitalism can accommodate many different specific forms of activity, as well as many debates about what is central to and distinctively characteristic of capitalism (Marshall ed. 1994: 38–40). (Lankshear, 1997, pp. 2–3)

Historically, capitalism has undergone a series of transformations—indeed, what is considered “new capitalism” now is actually just the newest form of capitalism

²⁶ Graham (2002) argues that capital “is not a ‘thing,’ it is an historically specific form of social relations (Marx, 1981:953)” (p. 227). The discussion of “new capitalism” here resonates with his conclusion.

(Fairclough, 2003). This current form centers on “the pursuit of a new accumulation strategy based on privatization, liberalization, de-regulation, the introduction of market proxies and benchmarking into the public sector, tax cuts, and . . . globalization” (Jessop, 2001, p. 2). This accumulation strategy has emerged alongside a series of global processes that include:

(1) internationalization of national economic spaces through growing penetration . . . and extraversion . . . ; (2) formation of regional economic blocs embracing several national economies . . . ; (3) growth of more “local internationalization” or “virtual regions” through the development of economic ties between contiguous or non-contiguous regional authorities . . . ; (4) extension and deepening of multinationalization as multinational companies and transnational banks move from limited economic activities abroad to more comprehensive and worldwide strategies, sometimes extending to “global localization” whereby firms pursue a global strategy based on exploiting and/or adjusting to local differences; (5) widening and deepening of international regimes covering economic and economically relevant issues; and (6) emergence of globalization proper through the introduction and acceptance of global norms and standards, the development of globally integrated markets together with globally oriented strategies, and “deracinated” firms with no evident national operational base. (Jessop, 2000, p. 341)

Over the last half-century, these trends have altered the nature of production and the order of wage-producing work. Lankshear (1997), relying on Castells (1993), summarizes these changes as follows:

1. Sources of productivity depend increasingly on the application of science and technology and the quality of information and management in the production process: applied knowledge and information. “The greater the

complexity and productivity of an economy, the greater its informational component and the greater the role played by new knowledge (as compared with the mere addition of such production factors as capital or labor) in the growth of productivity” (ibid: 16–17). Producers are forced to build their activities around “higher value-added production,” which depends on increased use of high technology and abstract thinking—or what Reich (1992) refers to as the work of symbolic analysts. Major innovations during the past thirty years, which have underwritten new spheres of production and vastly enhanced productivity, are all the results of “applying theoretical knowledge to the processes of innovation and diffusion” (Levett and Lankshear 1994: 31).

2. An increasing proportion of GNP is shifting from material production to information-processing activities. The same holds for the working: whether “foot soldiers of the information economy . . . stationed in ‘back offices’ at computer terminals linked to world wide information banks” (Reich 1992:175), or as “symbolic analysts” involved in the high order “problem solving, problem identifying and strategic brokering activities” performed by research scientists, design and software engineers, management consultants, writers and editors, architects and architectural consultants, marketing strategists, and many others besides (c.f., Reich 1992: 175). “An ever-growing role is played by the manipulation of symbols in the organization of production and in the enhancement of productivity” (Castells 1993: 17).

3. Major changes in the organization of production has occurred along two axes. First, goods production has shifted from standardised mass production to flexible specialisation and increased innovation and adaptability. This allows for optimal customisation and diversification of products, and enables quick shifts to be made between different product lines—reflect[ing] the postmodern

predilection for “difference” (that makes no difference) and diversity; plus the so-called flat hierarchies. Second, a change has occurred in the social relationships of work. The “vertically integrated large-scale organisations” of “old” standardised mass production capitalism have given way to “vertical disintegration and horizontal networks between economic units” (ibid: 18). This is partly a matter of flatter and increased devolution of responsibility to individual employees, and the creation of quality circles, multi-skilled work teams with interchangeable tasks, and enlarged scope for workers to participate in decision-making (within definite parameters). It is also a matter of horizontal relationships of co-operation, consultation, co-ordination, in the interests of flexibility, decentralisation, and adaptability in production, which extend beyond the confines of a specific business or firm to include other “partners” within an integrated productive enterprise: such as collaborative arrangements between manufacturers and suppliers which help keep overheads and stock inventories down, allowing competitive pricing which can undercut opponents.

4. The new capitalism is global in “real time”. National economies no longer comprise the unit of analysis or strategic frame of reference for companies and workers. For enterprises and workers alike, work is increasingly about playing on the whole world stage. For many individual workers, their competition comes from all over the world. And, of course, many companies are “all over the world and all at once”. Robert Reich says with respect to individual American workers that their prospects are now indexical to the global market. Individual American workers whose contributions to the global economy are more highly valued in world markets will succeed, while others, whose contributions are deemed far less valuable, fail” (Reich 1992: 172).

5. The context of this change—which reflexively spearheads and responds to it—is the information technologies revolution. The new capitalism is dynamically and inseparably linked to the current technological revolution—especially with the information-communications dimension of this revolution. In addition to informatics, microelectronics and telecommunications, this encompasses scientific discoveries and applications in biotechnology, new materials, lasers, renewable energy, and the like (Castells 1993: 19). The dynamism of the relationship is such that demands generated by the kinds of economic and organisational changes already identified stimulate ongoing developments in information and communications technologies. These technologies (in their earlier manifestations), however, themselves provided many of the material conditions needed for the emergence of the global economy in the first place. Set in train, as they are, the dynamics continue apace, creating a situation where a crucial factor—if not the fundamental source—of wealth generation resides in the “ability to create new knowledge and apply it to every realm of human activity by means of enhanced technological and organizational procedures of information processing” (ibid: 20). (Lankshear, 1997, pp. 4–6)

These changes in production, work, and accumulation have coincided with policy initiatives and less formal governance strategies on various levels aimed at producing “new forms of social regulation to create a multi-tiered market society that complements the globalizing market economy” (Jessop, 2001, p. 2). Jessop summarizes these changes as follows:

First, [the contemporary new capitalist regime] . . . seeks to promote international competitiveness and socio-technical innovation through supply-side policies in relatively open economies. Thus, with the symbolic

dethronement of John Maynard Keynes, today's emblematic economist is Joseph Schumpeter, the theorist of innovation, enterprise, and long waves of technological change. The economic policy emphasis now falls on innovation and competitiveness rather than full employment and planning. Second, social policy is being subordinated to economic policy so that labour markets become more flexible and downward pressure is placed on a social wage that is now considered as a cost of production rather than a means of redistribution and social cohesion. The Thatcher-Reagan neo-liberal strategy is only one possible form of workfare; others are less disciplinary and exclusionary. In all cases, however, the emphasis is on getting people from welfare into work and on creating enterprising subjects rather than relying on unsustainable welfare expenditures and the entrenchment of a culture of dependency. Third, the importance of the national scale of policy-making and implementation has diminished as local, regional, and supranational levels of government and social partnership have gained new powers. It is in this sense that the new regime can be described as post-national. There is widespread concern to find creative "post-national" solutions to current economic, political, social, and environmental problems rather than relying primarily on national institutions and networks. And, fourth, there is increasing reliance on partnership, networks, consultation, negotiation and other forms of reflexive self-organization rather than on the combination of anarchic market forces and top-down planning associated with the postwar "mixed economy" or on the old tripartite corporatist arrangements based on a producers' alliance between big business, big labour, and the national state. (pp. 2–3)

According to Jessop (2001), the new capitalist regime has given rise to social/political strategies intended to “promote or adjust to” (p. 3) the effects of global new capitalism. He categorizes these strategies as follows:

Neo-Liberalism

1. Liberalization—promote free competition
2. De-regulation—reduce role of law and state
3. Privatization—sell off public sector
4. Market proxies in residual public sector
5. Internationalization—free inward and outward flows
6. Lower direct taxes—increase consumer choice

Neo-statism

1. Government as agenda-setter rather planner
2. Guidance of national economic strategy
3. Auditing performance of private and public sectors
4. Public–Private partnerships under state guidance
5. Neo-mercantilist protection of core economy
6. Expanding role for new collective resources

Neo-corporatism

1. Re-balance competition and cooperation
2. De-centralized “regulated self-regulation”
3. Widen range of private, public, and other “stakeholders”
4. Expand role of public–private partnerships
5. Protect core economic sectors in open economy
6. High taxation to finance social investment

Neo-communitarianism

1. De-Liberalization—limit free competition

2. Empowerment—enhance role of third sector
3. Socialization—expand the social economy
4. Emphasis on social use-value and social cohesion
5. Fair trade not Free trade, Think Global, Act Local
6. Redirect taxes—citizens' wage, careers' allowances. (Jessop, 2001, p. 3)

As these strategies indicate, the term new capitalism “does not imply an exclusive focus on economic issues: transformations in capitalism have ramifications throughout social life, and ‘new capitalism’ as a research theme should be interpreted broadly as a concern with how these transformations impact on politics, education, artistic production, and many other areas of social life” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 4). Whether it is considered an economic or a discursive phenomenon, new capitalism should not be interpreted as a unitary, uni-directional phenomenon. “Indeed, notwithstanding the tendency for capital accumulation to expand until a single world market is achieved, there are important counter-tendencies and other limits to complete globalization” (Jessop, 2000, p. 327). “The development of the capitalist economy is embedded in a wider nexus of social relations and institutions and the lifeworld: its evolution is linked to environing, embedding institutions and the activities of wider social forces, and these institutions and forces may either help or hinder its overall reproduction, regularization and governance” (Jessop, p. 333).

As this evolution takes place, “there is a sense in which language (and more broadly semiosis . . .) is becoming more central and more salient in the new capitalism than in earlier forms of capitalism” (Fairclough, p. 2002, p. 163). “Transformations of organizations . . . under pressure of restructuring and re-scaling are partly, and significantly, semiotic and linguistic transformations” (Fairclough, p. 164). As Graham (2002) explains,

The global knowledge-based economy is also a globally mediated discourse-based economy (cf. Fairclough, 2000). In itself, this is enough to warrant a closer study of language in the new capitalism. . . . Today—at least officially—value is situated in mass mediated processes of meaning-making: it is discourse-based, institutionally legitimated and almost entirely unrelated to the production of anything other than itself (Jessop, 2001). Today, there is practically no aspect of humanity that exists outside the logic of money relations. (p. 246)

This understanding of new capitalism as a self-reinforcing discourse perpetuated in large part by everyday structures of language is what underlies the analysis that follows. The 2002 UNESCO policy exhibits a clear intensification of the discourse of new capitalism, which prevents other possible, competing discourses from effectively emerging.

CONTEXT

The data for this study are two UNESCO policy texts or “Plans of Action,” each of which corresponds to a “Decade of Literacy” (1990–2000 and 2003–2012), a designated time frame in which UNESCO aims to support the acceleration of literacy education around the world. The following is a summary of the 2003 Decade of Literacy drawn from documents published by UNESCO.²⁷ This information is intended to provide a context for the foregoing analysis. However, as is generally the case in textually-oriented CDA, the analysis will not take up in detail historical or ethnographic issues related to the Decades. Rather it will concentrate on the linguistic/social issues at play/work in the actual policy texts. That being the case, the summary of context here is relatively brief.

Background documents published on UNESCO’s Literacy Decade website provide the following account of the 2003 Decade’s emergence:

The fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution (Resolution A/RES/54/122 of 20 January 2000) to consider proclaiming a United Nations Literacy Decade. The proposal came from the following Member Nations: Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Madagascar, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Resolution requested that the Secretary General of the United Nations, in co-operation with the Director General of UNESCO, submit a proposal and a plan of action for this decade to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly in 2001. . . .

²⁷ As will be discussed, the focus of this study are the 2003 Decade plans. The 1990 plans serve as a comparative counterpoint. As such, detailed background about the 1990 policy is not provided here.

The Literacy Decade is an initiative of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted unanimously in a resolution of December 2001. Thus it expresses strongly the collective will of the international community, both those who face a big literacy challenge and those who may be in a position to give assistance in meeting it. The nations of the world recognise that the promotion of literacy is in the interest of all, as part of efforts towards peace, respect and exchange in a globalising world. (UNESCO, n.d.)

The U.N. Decade of Literacy (2003–2012) “aims to extend the use of literacy to those who do not currently have access to it” (UNESCO, n.d.). According to UNESCO, “over 861 million adults are in that position, and over 113 million children are not in school and therefore not gaining access to literacy either” (UNESCO, n.d.). The point of departure for the decade is the notion that “literacy efforts have so far failed to reach the poorest and most marginalised groups of people” (UNESCO, n.d.), and as such, “the Decade will particularly address such populations, under the banner of Literacy for all: voice for all, learning for all” (UNESCO, n.d.). As the banner suggests, “the Decade will focus on the needs of adults with the goal that people everywhere should be able to use literacy to communicate within their own community, in the wider society and beyond” (UNESCO, n.d.).

As UNESCO points out, “the Literacy Decade is also part of broader international work in education and development,” including wider development efforts. “The Education for All (EFA) goal of increasing literacy rates by 50% by 2015 provides the overall target for the Decade, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set the Decade in the context of poverty reduction. Literacy promotion is at the heart of both EFA and MDG goals” (UNESCO, n.d.). UNESCO identifies three justifications for these goals:

1. One in five people over the age of 15 cannot communicate through literacy or take any part in the surrounding literate environment. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 spelled out the scope of the challenge—over 861 million people without access to literacy. Two thirds of these people are women, with illiteracy thus adding to the deprivation and subordination to which women are already subject. In an interconnected world where literacy is a key to communication such exclusion is unacceptable.
 2. Literacy is a human right. Basic education, within which literacy is the key learning tool, was recognised as a human right over 50 years ago, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a scandal that this right continues to be violated for such a large proportion of humanity.
 3. Literacy efforts up to now have proved inadequate, at national and international levels. The Decade is an opportunity to make a sustained collective effort which will go beyond one-shot programmes or campaigns.
- (UNESCO, n.d.)

Based on these justifications, UNESCO has established six priority action areas, which they describe as follows:

1. Policy change: policies must provide a framework for local participation in literacy, including multilingual approaches and freedom of expression. National policy environments must link literacy promotion with strategies of poverty reduction and with programmes in agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS prevention, conflict resolution and other social concerns.
2. Flexible programmes: diverse and meaningful literacies require flexible modes of acquisition and delivery, using appropriate materials and languages, focusing on relevant purposes, and generating interesting, culturally relevant

and gender-sensitive materials at the local level. Well-trained non-formal facilitators will respect learners' needs. Programmes should enable learners to move on to more formal learning opportunities.

3. Capacity-building: as well as increasing and improving the training of literacy facilitators, capacity-building will focus on areas which need strengthening in particular countries. These may include the planning and management of programmes, research and documentation, material production and curriculum design.

4. Research: new policies for literacy will be most effective when they are based on the results of empirical research. This will answer questions such as: what is the long-term impact of literacy? How can local communities better participate? What is the extent of civil society engagement in literacy? Studies, databases and papers will make the outcomes of this research widely available.

5. Community participation: strong community ownership of the purposes and processes of literacy will result in its effective use. This requires good communication between government and communities, inter-community networks, community learning centres and other ways of ensuring that literacies are relevant and useful to people in their daily lives and serve their aspirations.

6. Monitoring and evaluation: better literacy indicators are necessary to show what progress is made during the Decade, both in terms of literacy rates and numbers, and in terms of the impact of literacy. UNESCO will work with its institutes and its partners to find improved ways of measuring literacy, in local contexts and worldwide. (UNESCO, n.d.)

UNESCO considers their approach to participation to be an important part of achieving goals related to these six action areas:

A key feature of the Decade will be the prominent role which learners take in the design of literacy strategies for their own situations. Standardised, one-size-fits-all literacy programmes have not on the whole been effective or led to sustainable literate environments. Other partners should participate in literacy promotion on the understanding that they will work in respectful ways with learners and their communities, jointly negotiating strategies, methods and approaches. Community-based organisations, NGOs and civil society will provide channels for collective action. Governments will have the responsibility to work closely with them, negotiating resource provision: training input, financial support, institutional recognition and validation.

At the international level, the UN General Assembly asked UNESCO to take on the coordinating role, bringing partners together for joint action and policy debate. The whole of the UN system is implicated, each part promoting literacy components within its own area of specialisation. International civil society networks have a responsibility both to sensitise their own members and to raise the awareness of governments and the general public about literacy. (UNESCO, n.d.)

UNESCO's approach to participation is based on the idea that "literacy is a plural concept, with diverse literacies shaped by their use in particular contexts. The Decade will work to promote literacies across the full range of purposes, contexts, languages, and modes of acquisition which communities of learners identify for themselves" (UNESCO, n.d.).

These published statements about the Decade reflect UNESCO's current programmatic trajectory for literacy, which stems from the organization's long-

standing mission to persuade “governments that universal literacy was fundamental element of basic human rights” (Jones, 1999, p. 354). Historically, UNESCO has approached this mission by “marshaling moral arguments backed by analysis of needs, demonstrations of best practice, limited-scale experimentation and pilot studies,” along with “the fostering of contacts and collaboration among governments, the academic community, and practitioners” (Jones, p. 354). With limited resources to engage in “all-out crash campaign[s],” UNESCO has opted instead to “provide global leadership in the literacy domain by formulating conceptual approaches to literacy that emphasize its definition and social consequences” (Jones, p. 354).

Since its inception in 1945, UNESCO’s conceptual formulations of literacy have evolved. In the early years, UNESCO took a “basic needs approach, which saw community-based literacy programs as an opportune vehicle for conveying socially and economically useful information” (Jones, 1999, p. 355). In the 1950s UNESCO began to align its thinking with UN development policies focused on community development. Around 1960, “the emergence of human capital theory . . . provoked a rapid acceptance of education as a means of stimulating economic growth, particularly by way of increased worker productivity. . . . It was quickly embraced by UNESCO by way of a general concept of functional literacy” (Jones, p. 355). However, “by the mid-1970’s, the UNESCO impulse to produce conceptual approaches for universal application had waned, and the subsequent two decades have seen a softer approach with emphasis placed on diversity and flexibility in literacy policy, with culture frequently invoked as an organizing concept, especially the kind of culture conducive to the promotion of human rights and world peace” (Jones, p. 355). Throughout UNESCO’s history, its conceptual commitments to literacy have been shaped by the organization’s inter-governmental structure. With multiple, competing interests driving its mission, UNESCO has generally emphasized the economic and social

benefits of literacy rather than its political consequences (Jones), “leaving political structures and norms unchallenged” (Jones, p. 355).

UNESCO’s approach to literacy education is part of a larger history of policy interventions encompassing different forms of international development. Literacy, or more broadly adult education

is a form of social policy, the product of deliberate actions by organisations to influence society (Griffin, 1987; Torres, 1990). It involves a variety of bodies, including the state and organisations of civil society, which seek to meet the needs, interests and values of different groups of society. The policy-making process involving these organizations are shaped by competing definitions of what kinds of intervention in society are appropriate, hence what forms of adult education should be undertaken. . . . Rationales for different kinds of social intervention are articulated in terms of ideas and values underpinned by theories of development. The nature of adult education . . . has therefore been influenced by the evolution of different schools of development theory.

(Youngman, 2000, p. 51)

These different schools of development theory are ways of representing aspects of the world (Fairclough, 2003)—or discourses—that have been highly influential in international literacy policy. What follows is a brief outline of some of the major theories that help to contextualize/historicize the UNESCO documents under review. Here I discuss only broad trends in the field of development, acknowledging that its history is rich and contested. The extensive body of literature devoted to development theories would serve as an important future starting point for examining development discourses that influence literacy policy.²⁸

²⁸ I do not examine these discourses in my study because the depth of evidence needed to construct an understanding of development would prevent me from exploring the discourses of new capitalism and new literacy studies with adequate detail. For an explanation of why I chose to focus on new capitalism and new literacy studies, see footnote 22 in the Methodology chapter of this study.

At the time of UNESCO's inception, the prevailing development paradigm was modernization theory, which refers to a variety of approaches that emphasize "the role of the state in macro-economic policy" (Youngman, 2000, p. 52). Generally, during the 1950s these approaches gained influence in part because of their skepticism of "neoclassical assumptions about the effectiveness of market mechanisms to stimulate appropriate investment for growth" (Youngman, p. 52).

Modernisation approaches had their basis not only in economics but also in sociological and psychological theories. In terms of economics, they saw "backward" economies as dominated by subsistence agriculture, with low rates of capital accumulation and investment, a small foreign trade sector and a low rate of economic growth. These economies were seen as poor because of low productivity, but as having potentially abundant labour. The proposed economic strategy was therefore to develop a "modern" sector based on industrialisation and commercial agriculture by mobilising the underemployed labour in the "traditional" rural sector. . . . This process required support by appropriate governmental measures, accompanied by external investment and foreign aid. (Youngman, 2000, pp. 52–53)

Underlying these modernizing interventions was the assumption that "there is a single process of social evolution, the highest stage having been reached by the USA in the 1950s" (Youngman, 2000, p. 53). The "modern industrial society"—fundamentally a capitalist society—was the ideal around which development programs centered (Youngman). Within this ideal society, "overall economic growth (measured in terms of gross national product and increases in average per capita income) would benefit everyone in society—it would 'trickle down' so that everyone's incomes and standard of living would improve" (Youngman, p. 54). Education in this approach was based on human capital theory that argued "that education was not a form of individual

consumption but a productive investment indispensable to rapid economic growth” (Youngman, p. 56). Modernization maintained a strong hold on policy through the 1980s and “remains the theoretical basis of much mainstream adult education” today (Youngman, p. 59).

In the mid 1960s the modernization paradigm came under criticism, particularly from theorists in the South who argued that “development in the Third World [is] conditioned by the domination of the advanced capitalist countries” (Youngman, 2000, 59). This alternative “dependency paradigm” used “concepts such as class and imperialism to study the relationship between advanced industrialised countries and the countries of the periphery” (Youngman, p. 59). This relationship was defined by “processes . . . by which . . . [economic] surplus is extracted from the periphery to the centre,” thus blocking capital accumulation in the world’s poorest countries (Youngman, pp. 59–60). Dependency theory asserted that

the present situation of poverty and low productivity in the countries of the Third World had been produced historically by their subordination in the world market, and was not an original condition resulting from their internal characteristics. (Youngman, 2000, p. 61)

Although this explanation represented an important theoretical shift in development, “dependency approaches . . . had little impact on policy,” perhaps because the “main conclusion of dependency analysis was that development must be based on a socialist revolution and disengagement from the world market” (Youngman, 2000, p. 63).

Where education was concerned, dependency theory took hold in the work of Paulo Freire and others who argued that “an important dimension of . . . dependency is cultural . . . [and] that the struggle for national independence must be accompanied by cultural action for freedom” (Youngman, p. 65).

Dependency theory of the 1960s and 70s represented a critique of modernization from the political Left; in the 1980s neoliberal critiques from the Right gained significant influence. These critiques were “derived from neoclassical economics and the theory of laissez-faire capitalism, in which the unimpeded operation of the market is seen as leading to an optimal economic situation” (Youngman, 2000, p. 67). In contrast to modernization theories that generally saw the state as the primary actor in development, neo-liberalism “regards interventions by governments as disruptive distortions of free competition in the marketplace” (Youngman, p. 67).

A central concern of neoclassical [neo-liberal] economists is therefore the need for reduced government intervention in the economy. They explicitly oppose Keynesian ideas about government spending and taxation policies, and seek to dismantle the welfare state. The accompanying political philosophy is that free-market capitalism is essential for democracy and individual freedom. (Youngman, 2000, p. 67)

Neo-liberalism is currently the dominant philosophy driving international development policy around the world. Countries in the South are typically the targets of these policies.

The advanced capitalist countries use conditional aid to pressurise governments in the South to reduce their public sectors, open up their economies to foreign trade and investment, and adopt democratic reforms. This has significantly reduced the sovereignty of many countries of the South, limiting their autonomy over economic and social policy and political affairs. (Youngman, 2000, p. 69)

From an educational perspective, there are two major implications of these policies: First, education efforts on the part of governments are increasingly oriented to the

needs of business. “The criteria for the development of education are enhancing individual productivity and entrepreneurship, and improving national economic performance” (Youngman, 2000, p. 69). Second, public expenditures on education are reduced and private sector organizations become more heavily involved in education. “Neoliberalism sees inequality as a source of individual incentive, so its educational prescriptions reject the concern of welfare capitalism with the issue of equity secured through state intervention” (Youngman, p. 70).

In the face of contemporary neo-liberal influence on development, alternative theories are taking hold—though with limited influence on policy. These alternatives include (1) environmentalism, with its focus on natural resource conservation; (2) ethnoculturalism and subaltern perspectives which emphasize indigenous knowledge/cultures and ethnicity; (3) post-development or post-colonialism, which interrogates the fundamental premises of development; and (4) feminism, which focuses on the needs and representation of women (Youngman, 2000). Each of these perspectives provides important critiques of the contemporary development project, and each is a discourse in its own right.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

The following chapter encompasses what might be traditionally considered the “Results” section of a conventional social-scientific dissertation. As is the case in many critical discourse analyses, the data and the analysis are difficult to parse into separate sections, so they are presented here in an interwoven fashion (see Taylor, 2004; Thomas, 2003, for similar formats). For clarity, I have organized the chapter into the following three subsections that build on each other: (1) Data: a technical justification for why I selected these particular UNESCO documents as data; (2) Analytical Overview: a (re)statement of the major arguments on which the analysis of the data centers—that is, a discussion of *what* discourses/discursive shifts are “naturalized” (Fairclough, 2003) in the texts; and (3) Analytical Evidence: a detailed discussion of the textual evidence supporting my arguments—that is, a discussion of *how* the identified discourses/discursive shifts are “naturalized” in the texts. The structure of this chapter is intended to support the central thesis of the dissertation, which is that two distinctive discursive shifts occur in the UNESCO documents between 1989 and 2002: a technical, rhetorical shift toward the ideological model of literacy and a discursive shift toward a new capitalist paradigm.

Data

As mentioned, I have chosen to analyze two UNESCO policy documents, each corresponding to a “Decade of Literacy” (1990–2000 and 2003–2012, respectively). The documents, formally known as “Plans of Action,” provide a framework for the UNESCO-led acceleration of literacy education around the world. Though the dissertation examines both documents, the analytical focus will be on the most recent policy (referred to in the document as the 2002 policy for the year it was written),

which is in effect at the time of this study. The 1990–2000 plan (referred to in the dissertation as the 1989 policy) is used here only as a comparative counterpoint.

I have chosen these particular documents for three main reasons. First, the decade between the two policies is period of time when ideas related to New Literacy Studies and the “ideological” (Street, 1993) model of literacy took hold. During this decade, scholars began to vocally promote an understanding of literacy as social practice. This understanding made its way into practitioner circles by the end of the 1990s, and at the turn of the century, the language of NLS began to be used widely in the field of literacy. Since this study traces the influence of the “ideological” model of literacy on institutional discourse, the documents’ chronology suits my purposes.

Second, UNESCO is presumably one of the most influential institutional advocates for literacy in the world. The organization has long been responsible for the dispersion of ideas regarding literacy to practitioners and policy makers. Rather than directly oversee literacy programs on the ground, UNESCO has opted instead to “provide global leadership in the literacy domain by formulating conceptual approaches to literacy that emphasize its definition and social consequences” (Johnson, 1999, p. 354). From the beginning, UNESCO “was to promote intellectual contacts and collaboration; it was to have an explicit functional orientation; and it was to have a standard-setting mission” (Johnson, p. 354). Given UNESCO’s prominent status in providing conceptual guidance in the field of literacy, it is an obvious focal point for a study of policy discourse.

Third, the documents are policy statements, which are considered from a discourse-analytic perspective to be “crucial tension point[s],” (Fairclough, 1995) or “moments of crisis” (Woodside-Jiron, 2004, p. 177):

These are times when things are changing or going wrong. What is significant about these moments in time is that they provide opportunities to deconstruct

the various aspects of practices that are often naturalized and therefore difficult to notice. . . . Here policy documents, documents that serve to redefine current thinking that have high circulation rates, and specific events where particular voices, ideas or agendas are brought to the front and acted on all become important sites for investigation. (Woodside-Jiron, p. 177)

As discussed in the methodology section above, in approaching the policies as data, I applied the methodological lenses of CDA and conducted multiple micro-, macro- and mezzo-level readings of the policies. As is evident in the layout of the analysis, I often began these multiple readings with a focus on the policies' lexicons, since lexical differences most clearly signal discursive differences (Fairclough, 2003). Using lexical differences as a point of departure, I then examined grammatical, semantic, and syntactic structures that appeared to be significant to the development of the discourses in question. Specific "tools of inquiry" (Gee, 1999) I applied in my examination are discussed in detail in the analysis.

The full text of each policy document appears in Appendices A and B of the dissertation. Relevant excerpts appear throughout the analysis and are referenced by paragraph and page numbers that correspond to the appendices. To maintain the flow of the arguments in the analysis, much of the supporting data is contained in footnotes. As such, footnoted information is somewhat dense and should be considered central to the major arguments in the analysis.

Analytical Overview

In a discursive inquiry, as discussed in the methodology section of this dissertation, the goal "is to denaturalize ideologies that have been naturalized" (Rogers, 2004, p. 252). Naturalization occurs when ideologies and identities are discursively situated in a common sense format so that some are normalized and others are marginalized. When "ideologies and discourse practices attain the status of

common sense, [they] become difficult to recognize or push against” (Woodside-Jiron, 2004, p. 200). As such, “analyzing this process of naturalization in the structural analysis of text, we come to understand the ways in which ideologies are embedded in discursive practices and made more effective by becoming naturalized” (Woodside-Jiron, p. 200). In the analysis that follows, I compare two roughly equivalent policy documents produced by UNESCO in 1989 and 2002, respectively. Each document, corresponding to a decade (1990–2000 and 2003–2012), sets forth UNESCO’s plans for literacy work around the world. In comparing these parallel documents, I examine the ways in which particular ideologies and discourses become naturalized and argue that two important discursive shifts occur between 1989 and 2003.

The first shift, in which the 2002 document adopts key terms and constructs used in New Literacy Studies, appears to be a move on the part of UNESCO to integrate aspects of the “ideological” model (Street, 1993) of literacy into its policy framework. As discussed in the review above, this model conceptualizes literacy as plural, social practices through which ideology and power operate. This significant and apparently deliberate move, however, operates in the text on a rather superficial level. Though the document gives a policy voice to particular features of the ideological model, issues related to ideology and power—central concerns of the model—are absent. Thus, in the end, the shift falls short of a complete “ideological” transformation.

The second shift centers on the development of the discourse of new capitalism (e.g., Fairclough, 2003; Gee et al., 1996) in the 2002 policy. This discourse, which focuses on the societalization of economic globalization, has a pronounced effect on constructs of literacy and literacy education in the 2002 text, especially when compared with the 1989 document. The often “undialogic” (Fairclough) operation of new capitalist discourse circumscribes literacy as a concept and the proposed system

for literacy education so as to displace important “ideological” considerations. The “interdiscursive” (Fairclough) relationship between the discourse of new capitalism and the ideological model of literacy, in which new capitalism tends to dominate, dilutes the potential of the 2002 policy to fully move beyond rationalized, instrumental approaches to education. To explain the operation of this relationship, I describe with fairly broad strokes in the next section the discursive character of each policy document—the general trends that are examined in the analysis. In the subsequent section, I identify and discuss the specific textual features that contribute to the development of these discursive trends.

Policy Overview

At first glance, the 1989 and 2002 policies appear very similar. They are both “Plans of Action” centered on worldwide literacy efforts. However, the character of each document differs significantly when examined from a discursive perspective. Though the documents share similar generic (as in “genre”; Fairclough, 2003) patterns, they offer different representations of the world with distinct implications for the practice(s) of literacy. These representations are naturalized in the documents so as to make their political implications less than transparent. What follows is a brief discussion of *what* key representations are naturalized in the texts; the subsequent section discusses *how* these representations are naturalized. The major discourses referred to in the analysis are the “autonomous” and “ideological” (Street, 1993) discourses on literacy and the discourses of “old” and “new capitalism” (e.g., Gee et al., 1996). Tables 1 and 2 outline key features of each discourse referenced in the analysis.

Table 1. Dimensions of “Ideological” and “Autonomous” Discourses on Literacy

IDEOLOGICAL	AUTONOMOUS
Focus on multiplicity, plurality of literacies	Focus on universalized literacy
Primacy of local contexts, communities	Primacy of generalizable theories of language
Questions claims about consequences of literacy	Assumes consequences of literacy
Local control of literacy education	Mass, standardized approaches to literacy education
Overlap and interface between oral, literate and other semiotic modes	Great divide between literate/non-literate
Literacy as social practice	Literacy as isolatable skill
Concern with distribution of power through literacy activities	Concern with technical achievement; negation of power/ideology

Table 2. Dimensions of “Old” and “New” Capitalist Discourses

OLD CAPITALISM	NEW CAPITALISM
Primacy of National Scale	“Revitalization of scale” (local-regional-national-international)
Economics of state-driven mass consumption, production and trade (Keynes)	Economics of corporate-driven innovation, entrepreneurship (Schumpeter)
Democratization of desire (homogeneity)	Customization of desire (heterogeneity—identity politics)
Top-down, hierarchical “government” of organizations	Distributed, heterarchical “governance” of organizations
Importance of productive capacity	Importance of knowledge, information, technology
Public/social monitoring	Privatization and liberalization

1989 Policy

The stated goal of the 1989 policy is to “promote the creation of a literate world by the end of the century” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1, para. 1). Though UNESCO states that “absolute priority should be given to the struggle against illiteracy” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1, para. 2), the policy claims not to be a “‘blueprint’ for building a literate world” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3). As the plan states, “UNESCO does not possess the means to take on so daunting a task. If universal literacy is to be achieved, it can only be accomplished through an enormous collective enterprise involving governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, hundreds of thousands of communities and hundreds of millions of individuals around the world” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3). The purpose of the document, then, “is to set forth the modest but significant contribution which Unesco can make to this vast and essential undertaking” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3).

Accordingly, “the aims of the Plan of Action are:”

- (i) to alert world public opinion to the scope and magnitude of illiteracy—in its different forms—and to the danger this poses to the harmonious development of society;
- (ii) to rally the international community to the cause of literacy in order to ensure a conducive environment for literacy work within Member States and international solidarity among them;
- (iii) to pursue, with increased resources and resolve, the regional projects and programmes for combating illiteracy, including the extension and strengthening of the network based at the Unesco Institute for Education (Hamburg) for exchanging experiences in preventing and combating functional illiteracy in the industrialized countries; and

(iv) to provide more effective technical co-operation to Member States, including in particular an enhanced flow of documents and information on national experiences and a reinforcement of training activities for national specialists. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

Within these stated purposes, the 1989 policy is guided by a clear autonomous discourse on literacy, which operates in the text in rather conventional ways. Though there are some references to diverse populations of learners, for example, the policy exhibits a “mass” approach—a focus on the desired universality of literacy. Theories underlying this approach appear to be rooted in the conceptual “Great Divide,” which is reproduced throughout the document in language that distinguishes the individual and societal characteristics of “literate” and “illiterate” peoples. As is the case with many instances of autonomous discourse, the consequences of illiteracy, as stated in the 1989 policy, are cast as undesirable not only for “illiterates,” but for the world at large. Not surprisingly then, the tone of the document is urgent and crusading, with images of combat informing the policy’s central “irrealis”²⁹—the goal of “eradicat[ing] illiteracy” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1, “Plan to Eradicate Illiteracy”).

In the 1989 policy, there are few clear distinctions made in the uses or identities associated with different literacy activities; there are no overt attempts to concretize or culturally locate particular literacies. The policy aims to support research to deepen the world’s understanding of literacy, but this research is to be focused primarily on the acontextual causes and consequences of illiteracy. Underlying this approach are models clearly concerned with abstract, generalizing theories of language—“Literacy with a capital L and single y” (Street, 1995, p. 2). Though the document does not make explicit reference to pedagogical strategies, what would naturally follow from this approach are rather standardized methods of instruction.

²⁹ “Irrealis” is the “potential,” as contrasted with “realis,” or the “actual,” in policy texts (Graham, 2001).

Literacy is represented as instrumental to pre-figured development outcomes, and issues of power and ideology are altogether absent from the text. These trends clearly signal the presence of an over-arching autonomous discourse.

Along with the autonomous discourse, the 1989 policy exhibits features of the discourse of old capitalism or “Atlantic Fordism.”³⁰ In the policy for example, the governance of literacy education—the proposed systems for services—is left primarily to states. The policy seeks the participation of other “partners” (NGOs, local governments, communities, individuals), but the responsibilities of implementation and oversight are allocated to national governments. Distinctions between different types of literacy services and programmatic outcomes are made primarily within the matrix of nationhood. Regional, local, and international scales are present, but the major part of the action takes place on a national level. Coupled with the policy’s emphasis on “government” rather than “governance” (see Jessop, 1997a), the primacy of the nation-state in the policy indicates an old capitalist discourse. This discourse is also reinforced through the relative absence of roles for private sector actors in the policy.

Old capitalism is also manifest in the document through a traditional focus on the productive capacity of individuals, rather than a focus on the individual’s ability to manipulate knowledge, information, or technology (an indicator of new capitalist discourse). Indeed, communication and information are rarely emphasized in reference to learners in the 1989 policy. There is no clear evidence in the text of an encroaching (much less imminent) knowledge economy, and the use of technology is mentioned only as a medium for instruction—not as an end of literacy education. Given these

³⁰ The newest form of new capitalism on which my analysis centers is compared to the previous form known as “old capitalism” (Gee et al., 1996) or Atlantic Fordism (e.g., Jessop, 2000). “Atlantic Fordism can be briefly defined as an accumulation regime based on a virtuous autocentric circle of mass production and mass consumption secured through a distinctive mode of regulation that was institutionally and practically materialized in the Keynesian welfare national state” (Jessop, 2000, p. 338).

trends, the 1989 document—though other discourses (beyond the scope of this study) certainly operate within it—is used in this analysis as an example of the autonomous discourse on literacy and the discourse of old capitalism.

2002 Policy

In the introduction to the 2002 policy, UNESCO calls the Plan of Action part of the larger efforts of Education for All, which hinges on six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action:³¹

- (1) Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- (2) Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- (3) Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
- (4) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- (5) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring

³¹ UNESCO (n.d.) explains the Dakar Framework as follows:

In April 2000 more than 1,100 participants from 164 countries gathered in Dakar, Senegal, for the World Education Forum. Ranging from teachers to prime ministers, academics to policymakers, non-governmental bodies to the heads of major international organizations, they adopted the 2000-word Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.

This document reaffirms the goal of education for all as laid out by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) and other international conferences. It commits governments to achieving quality basic education for all by 2015 or earlier, with particular emphasis on girls' education, and includes a pledge from donor countries and institutions that "no country seriously committed to basic education will be thwarted in the achievement of this goal by lack of resources." (UNESCO, n.d.)

girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;

(6) Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3)

As the policy states,

Literacy is the common thread that runs through the six goals. Indeed, the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all will ensure that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals and their communities. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3)

In contrast to the 1989 document with its over-arching autonomous discourse, the 2002 policy invokes language reminiscent of the ideological model of literacy. This language casts literacy as multiple, social practices at different points in the text and focuses to some degree on the contextualized, local uses of these practices. Traditional, stigmatic language is absent from the policy, and while the plan makes apparent the need for literacy education around the world, it does so without crusading or combative images.

In more procedural language, rather, the policy uses instrumental metaphors to promote its irrealis. These metaphors are part of an over-arching new capitalist discourse that operates in the text in various ways. In this discourse, literacy functions crucially as a "tool" needed to "survive" in a globalized world. Knowledge, information and technology are significant tropes in the policy that guide a "vision" of literacy based in large part on the individual's ability to be inserted into a global

economy. Though the policy makes important references to personal and social uses of literacy, patterned features of a new capitalist paradigm eclipse these uses.

The 2002 policy's proposed structure of service delivery, like some of its models of literacy, also reflects a new capitalist discourse. Rather than focusing attention on the role nation states, as the 1989 policy does, the 2002 plan proposes a decentralized system of regulation and accountability reflective of new capitalist governance structures. Within this system, in which organizations self-organize in "heterarchical relationships" (Jessop, 2000), there is an increased role for private sector organizations and other "partners." The delivery of literacy services by these partners hinges on a local-regional-national-inter/extra-national dialectic, in which traditional notions of scale expand and collapse. This "distributed system" (Gee et al., 1996) of governance complements the contemporary globalized economy with its diffuse system of accountability.

As the evidence below demonstrates, the discourse of new capitalism operates powerfully in the 2002 policy so as to neutralize to some degree the language of the ideological model of literacy that appears in the text. Significantly, linguistic features of the ideological model and linguistic features of new capitalism overlap in the document making it difficult at times to parse out the operation of the respective discourses. As is argued below, this overlap is a form of discursive colonization in which new capitalism uses key elements of the ideological model of literacy to advance its agenda.

Analytical Evidence

To understand how the policies naturalize discourses, we must first look at the documents' larger discursive functions. These macro-level functions comprise the documents' genre. As Fairclough (2003) explains, "One way of acting and interacting is through speaking and writing, so discourse figures first and 'part of the action'. We

can distinguish different genres as different ways of (inter)acting discursively” (p. 26). “Genres can be identified at different levels of abstraction: highly abstract ‘pre-genres’ such as Narrative or Report, which generalize over many different forms of narrative and report at a more concrete level” (Fairclough, p. 216) or, for example, “situated genres which are tied to particular networks of social practices (e.g., genres of political interview in contemporary American or British television)” (Fairclough, p. 216).

Fairclough (2003) explains that “Genres are important in sustaining the institutional structure of contemporary society—structural relations between (local) government, business, universities, the media, etc. We can think of such institutions as interlocking elements in the governance of society (Bjerke 2000), and of such genres as genres of governance”³² (p. 32). “I am using ‘governance’ here in a very broad sense for any activity within an institution or organization directed at regulating or managing some other (network of) social practice(s)” (Fairclough, p. 32). Genres of governance can be contrasted with “practical genres,” which “figure in doing things rather than governing the way things are done” (Fairclough, p. 32).

Genres of governance “are characterized by specific properties of recontextualization—the appropriation of elements of one social practice within another, placing the former within the context of the latter, and transforming it in particular ways in the process (Berstein, 1990, Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999)” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 222). Recontextualization can be represented not only as appropriation but also “transformation and colonization—a terminology which brings into focus the social relations of power in governance of which these recontextualizations are a part” (Fairclough, p. 33). Policy documents are a genre of governance with specific recontextualizing tendencies:

³² “The increasing popularity of the term ‘governance’ is associated with a search for ways of managing social life . . . which avoid both the chaotic effects of markets and the top-down hierarchies of states . . . contemporary governance can be seen as combining all these forms—markets, hierarchies, networks” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 32).

When other social practices are recontextualized within policy documents, it is predictable . . . that there will be a high degree of abstraction from and generalization across concrete events, and that causal and temporal relations will be specified between these abstractions. . . . Such policy documents are important in linking scales—generalising over many local cases (and—a standard critique—thereby suppressing difference) to make claims which hold and have policy implications nationally and internationally. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 141)

Drawing on Fairclough's³³ (2003) understanding of policy, I analyze 1989 and 2002 plans of action as “genres of governance,” looking specifically at how the documents organize and regulate the social practice(s) of literacy. In doing so, I highlight the definitional parameters of literacy within the policy—in other words, how the practical genre of literacy education is recontextualized in the governing genre of policy. This particular analytical undertaking sheds light on what really “counts” as literacy within the documents.

The first section of this analysis focuses specifically on constructs of literacy present in the policy documents—the models of literacy promoted through the discursive structures of the text. The second section examines the proposed configuration of governance for literacy education—the roles of institutions and other social actors in the delivery of literacy services. In both sections of the analysis, I trace

³³ As an example, Fairclough's analysis of EU policy documents prepared for the European Council by the Competitiveness Advisory Group highlights the abstracting, generalizing tendencies of policy recontextualization demonstrating how the document

represents . . . highly complex series and sets of economic and social events, past, present and predicted, at a high level of abstraction—there is not only generalization over complex series and sets of events . . . , and abstraction of facets which cut across sets and series of events . . . , but also the most abstract level of structural relations. . . . Particular series or sets of events . . . are not located in time and place—indeed indifference to place . . . is thematized. But time becomes important in the arrangement and/ordering of these highly abstract representations of events in relation to each other in the text: in particular, in organizing a relationship between “realis” and “irrealis” the actual world (past/present) and the predicted and prescribed world of policy. (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 140–141)

the development of the “ideological” (Street, 1993) discourse on literacy and the discourse of “new capitalism” (Fairclough, 2003), using the “autonomous” (Street) discourse and the discourse of “old capitalism” (Gee et al., 1997) as comparative counterpoints.

Constructs of Literacy

The following section examines how the policy documents under review use particular terms to construct an understanding of literacy. As a comparative exercise, the chapter traces the appearance, disappearance, and varied usage of key terms related to literacy as a concept across the 1989 and 2002 policies and postulates how these terms contribute to the textual (re)production or suppression of the ideological discourse of literacy and the discourse of new capitalism. Through the analysis, I argue that a significant rhetorical shift takes place between 1989 and 2002. Centered on the concept of literacy, this shift represents a seemingly deliberate move on the part of UNESCO to adopt language that corresponds to an ideological model of literacy. When compared to the 1989 policy—which displays obvious features of an autonomous discourse—this shift appears especially pronounced. I also argue, however, that many of the features corresponding to an ideological discourse in the 2003 document signal the presence of a new capitalist discourse as well. Because new capitalism is naturalized so successfully in the document, this overlap between discursive features prevents the ideological discourse from effectively emerging.

Table 3 summarizes the textual evidence that supports this argument with specific reference to constructs of literacy within the 2002 policy. The first three rows of the table list features of the 2002 policy that could apply to both the ideological discourse on literacy and the discourse of new capitalism—features of the discourses that overlap. The remaining rows list features that apply specifically to the ideological or the new capitalist discourse (the rows are divided into columns accordingly).

Because of the interdiscursive relationships evidenced in the features, the order in which they are listed in the table and the order in which they are discussed in the analysis are not the same. The table is intended to be a heuristic; discourses do not generally fit into neat categories, as discussed in the analysis below. For clarity, the analysis is divided into sections that discuss the metaphors for literacy, types of literacy and contexts of literacy laid out in the policy documents.

Table 3. Select Evidence of “Ideological” and “New Capitalist” Discourses in Constructs of Literacy

IDEOLOGICAL	NEW CAPITALIST
Emphasis on plurality (e.g., use of terms “literacies” and “literacy practices”; disappearance of “universal literacy” and “illiterate”; “literate world” replaced with “literate societies” and “environments”; more specific “types” of literacy mentioned)	
Focus on contexts (e.g., significant increase in references to “context”; expansion of identity groups of learners; amplified uses of literacy)	
Primacy of local (e.g., significant increase in references to “local” and “community”; emphasis on individual)	
Disappearance of metaphors of “combat,” “eradication,” and “quest”	Appearance of metaphors of “tool,” “step,” “foundation,” “vision”
	Emphasis on “(lifelong) learning,” “critical thinking,” and “empowerment”
	Vision of “knowledge society” and “globalized world”
	Emphasis on “technology” and “communication”

Metaphors for Literacy

A fundamental means for identifying discourses within or across texts is to examine the texts' "lexical metaphors" (Fairclough, 2003). In these metaphors, which frame our understanding through implicit analogies, "words which generally represent one part of the world [are] extended to another" (Fairclough, p. 131). Since "metaphor is one resource for producing distinct representations of the world" (Fairclough, p. 132), "such metaphors differ between discourses" (Fairclough, p. 131).

In the 1989 and 2003 policies, the lexical metaphors related to the concept of literacy are particularly distinct, signaling the operation of different discourses. In 1989, literacy or literacy education is cast as a "quest"³⁴ to "eradicate"³⁵ or "combat"³⁶

³⁴ (UNESCO, 1989, p. 16, para. 46)

³⁵ (22 references to the term "eradicate.") As noted, the title of the 1989 document is the "Plan to Eradicate Illiteracy by the year 2000." The use of the metaphor of eradication in the title sets the tone for the rest of the document. The policy states that essential building blocks for the plan are regional programs, which also center on the metaphor of eradication (e.g., the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa, the Regional Programme for the Universalization and Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy in the Arab States by the Year 2000, UNESCO, p. 8, para. 26). Other examples of the use of the term "eradicate" in the policy include the following (taken from the introduction and the conclusion of the policy respectively:

This document is submitted pursuant to resolution 4.6 of the General Conference at its twenty-third session, which invites the Director-General, "when the third Medium-Term Plan is being drawn up, to prepare a plan of action to help Member States in all regions of the world to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000." (UNESCO, 1989, Summary)

It must be realized, however, that these actions will be fruitful only to the extent that they set in motion a vigorous dynamic within Member States resolutely oriented towards the eradication of illiteracy in the shortest possible time and supported by a firm political determination and an energetic mobilization of resources and wills. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 16, para. 25)

³⁶ (7 references to the term combat: UNESCO, 1989 p. 1, para. 1; p. 2, para. 3; p. 5, para. 12; p. 6, para. 13; p. 9, para. 27; p. 11, para. 32.) Examples of the metaphor of combat are present in the following passages:

to pursue, with increased resources and resolve, the regional projects and programmes for combating illiteracy, including the extension and strengthening of the network based at the Unesco Institute for Education (Hamburg) for exchanging experiences in preventing and combating functional illiteracy in the industrialized countries; (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

The positive developments—the impressive progress being made in many countries—are often insufficiently covered. Illiteracy is a massive and serious problem, but it is one for which humanity has an answer and which it is combating with success. Optimism must be part of the literacy message. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 5, para. 12)

The regional literacy programmes are examples of unity in diversity. All are based on two fundamental principles: technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDCS) and the need to combat illiteracy through a global approach combining the universalization and

“danger.”³⁷ UNESCO sets out unequivocally to “combat illiteracy,”³⁸ “overcome illiteracy,”³⁹ and “struggle against illiteracy.”⁴⁰ Given, as the policy states, “the scope and magnitude of illiteracy . . . and . . . the danger this poses to the harmonious development of society” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3), “illiteracy” is considered a “matter of special urgency which should be a priority objective of the international community and Unesco” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 5). The “quest to create a literate world is a long-term engagement” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 16, para. 46).

The metaphors in the 1989 plan in which illiteracy is cast as a wartime enemy to combat or a disease to eradicate are not unfamiliar. As vestiges of nineteenth-century attempts to equate literacy with social morality, they are the basis of popular understandings of “Great Divide” theories, as discussed in the literature review above. Historian Harvey Graff (1995) explains,

The prominence accorded formal schooling and instruction in literacy for the masses as a social assurance against criminality and disorder forms one significant example of the broad new consensus about education which emerged throughout Anglo-America by mid-[nineteenth] century. In a period of massive social change, of urban-industrial modernization, education increasingly was seen as the dominant tool for social stability for societies in which stratification by social class had replaced traditional paternalistic control

renewal of primary education with stepped-up literacy work among out-of-school youth and adults. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 9, para. 27)

³⁷ (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

³⁸ (e.g., 1989, p. 6, para. 14.) See footnote 36 for complete list of references to “combat.”

³⁹ (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1, para. 1)

⁴⁰ (8 references, e.g., 1989, p. 3, para. 8.) Examples of the metaphor of “struggle” in the text include:

The purpose which the General Conference has established for the Plan of Action is to help Member States in their struggle against illiteracy. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 3, para. 8)

Numerous studies and analyses of the role which Unesco can play in the struggle against illiteracy have, with near unanimity, stressed the Organization’s responsibility to make better known to world public opinion the scope, nature and gravity of the problem of illiteracy and its implications for society. (UNESCO, 1989, pp. 4–5, para. 11)

Considering that the struggle against illiteracy is an undertaking which primarily involves the national responsibility and depends for its success upon political will and popular support (UNESCO, 1989, p. 16, para. 47)

by rank and deference. . . . No longer could proper social morality and values be successfully transmitted by informal and traditional means; the forces of change necessitated formal institutions to provide morally grounded instruction aided, eased, and speeded by carefully structured provision of literacy. . . . Morality without literacy was more than ever seen as impossible. (p. 200)

As an extension of this nineteenth-century trend, metaphors of war or eradication have been used through the twentieth century in western civilizations as the basis for literacy campaigns. “In a Unesco-commissioned review of twentieth century national literacy campaigns, H.S. Bhola defines the typical literacy campaign as a ‘mass approach that seeks to make all adult men and women in a nation literate within a particular time frame. Literacy is seen as a means to a comprehensive set of ends—economic, social-structural, *and political*’ (Arnove & Graff, 1987, p. 3). According to Bhola, “a campaign suggests urgency and combativeness; it is in the nature of an expectation; it is something of a ‘crusade.’ Sometimes this becomes the moral equivalent of war” (as cited in Arnove & Graff, p. 3).

There are, not coincidentally, clearly stated discursive purposes for reproducing the metaphors of war in the 1989 plan. The metaphors provide for a common enemy—something to crusade against. Constructing a shared enemy allows UNESCO to discount differences between organizations, states, and communities involved in “the cause of literacy” (e.g., UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3).⁴¹ As the

⁴¹ There are three references in the 1989 policy to the “cause of literacy”:

The aims of the Plan of Action are: . . . (ii) to rally the international community to the cause of literacy in order to ensure a conducive environment for literacy work within Member States and international solidarity among them; (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

[In reference to earlier program efforts by UNESCO] While the results of this programme were generally positive and have had a lasting impact on literacy work in a number of countries, the success of the programme was not measured by its achievements, but against the euphoric claims and rhetoric of the early years. By these unrealistic standards, it was considered a failure and was widely reported to be such in the media. Both Unesco and the cause of literacy suffered as a consequence. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 4, para. 9)

document explains, “literacy is an idea around which world public opinion can be mobilized, alliances with other organizations and agencies forged and enhanced co-operation with Member States pursued” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1, para. 2). Still, the document does acknowledge the limitations of this approach stating, “Illiteracy is too often presented as a fatality or fact of life. The emphasis upon the enormity of the problem, even if intended to motivate, can be discouraging and demoralizing. . . . Illiteracy is a massive and serious problem, but it is one for which humanity has an answer and which it is combating with success. Optimism must be part of the literacy message” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 5, para. 12).

Interestingly, the 1989 document concedes the inadequacy of the metaphors of war/eradication on other grounds as well:

Among the issues raised in this study (para. 112) is whether or not it is wise to aim at a goal which is widely recognized to be unachievable: the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000. This same issue has also been discussed and debated in numerous settings, including the General Conference and Executive Board. The Experimental World Literacy Programme, which Unesco conducted in co-operation with other agencies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, provides a cautionary lesson concerning the proclamation of overly ambitious objectives. While the results of this programme were generally positive and have had a lasting impact on literacy work in a number of countries, the success of the programme was not measured by its achievements, but against the euphoric claims and rhetoric of the early years. By these unrealistic standards, it was considered a failure and was widely

[In reference to International Literacy Day] Attention will be given to devising ways to make this event more visible and effective in focusing public attention on literacy issues—to make it, as intended, a unique annual occasion for reviewing progress and problems and honouring those who have rendered exemplary service to the cause of literacy. Consultations with the International Literacy Prize Jury will be conducted to this end. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 6, para. 15)

reported to be such in the media. Both Unesco and the cause of literacy suffered as a consequence. The Director-General considers that it may be wise to put an end to such debate by adopting a title upon which all can agree. He proposes “The Unesco Plan of Action for Literacy, 1990–2000”. In addition to being more realistic, such a title more accurately corresponds to the nature of the educational process which involves fostering, nurturing and instilling far more than eradicating or eliminating. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 4, para. 9)

Significantly, despite the Director-General’s recommendation, the plan was still named “The Plan to Eradicate Illiteracy,” perhaps demonstrating the pervasive influence of the notion of a Great Divide. After all, as indicated by the Director-General, the major problem with the title of the plan was not its language, but the impossibility of the goal it promotes. The almost parenthetical note regarding the “fostering, nurturing, instilling” nature of education process is buried beneath powerfully constructed metaphors of war, a clear indicator of an over-arching autonomous discourse.

Still it is worth noting that the 1989 policy attempts to “dialogue” (see Fairclough, 2003) to some degree the use of the term “eradicate.” There is an attempt to recognize a polemic in the choice of words and acknowledge potential consequences of that choice (though the polemic is relatively muted in comparison to the rest of the document). This is one of the few instances of overt dialogization that occurs in either the 1989 or the 2002 policy. In the grand scheme of the document, the level of dialogue amounts to, “a bracketing of difference, a focus on commonality, solidarity” (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 41–42). Still, at least particular terms are questioned internally—a gesture not repeated in the 2002 policy to any substantial degree.

As the title of the 1989 policy indicates, the lexical metaphors in the document depend heavily on the term “illiteracy” to function. One of the most striking lexical

shifts that occurs between the 1989 and 2003 documents, then, is reflected in the use of the term “illiteracy.” In academic and policy circles, the term (in all its forms) has generally fallen out of favor in recent years, thanks in large part to discursive requirements of the ideological model of literacy and other related conceptions. These new models, as discussed in the review above, highlight the multiple, context-bound ways that individuals and groups use various literacies differently (i.e., in ways not measured by prevailing standardized assessments that rely on binary distinctions). Within literacy studies and now increasingly in policy thought, this understanding has led to a wholesale rejection of the term “illiteracy” and its attendant stigmas.⁴² As St. Clair and Sandlin (2004) explain,

In the theoretical arena, the “new literacy studies” and other more sophisticated ways of understanding the relationship between humans and written language make the term inadequate. The idea of literacy as a set of social practices involving symbolic language (Barton, 1994) creates a need to go beyond a simple view of literacy as a set of skills possessed by some people and not by others. It challenges the notion of a single inclusive measure of literacy and calls for great care in the way we conceptualize these practices. Above all, it makes illiteracy meaningless, for everybody is “illiterate” in some of the social practices of literacy. (p. 46)

Published before the rise of ideological model and related conceptions of literacy, the 1989 UNESCO policy employs the term “illiteracy” (in one of its forms) 85 times.

The term is used throughout the document without reference to what counts as

⁴² Street (1995) explains the origins of the stigma as follows:

The stigma derives from a mistaken association of literacy difficulties with ignorance, mental backwardness and social incapacity. . . . One reason [for the stigma] has been the prevalence of the “great divide” theory: if these difficulties are associated with the category of “illiteracy” and that category is associated with lack of cognitive functions, or with backwardness, then the stigma is inevitable. If, on the other hand, they are located in a theoretical framework that assumes there to be a variety of *literacies* in different contexts, no one line between literate and illiterate, and a range of cognitive and social skills associated with orality and literacy equally, then the agenda shifts and the stigma becomes meaningless. (pp. 23–24)

“illiteracy” or who counts as “illiterate.” The following statements are typical examples:

The purpose which the General Conference has established for the Plan of Action is to help Member States in their struggle against illiteracy. If priorities must be set, the greatest support should, *ceteris paribus*, go to the States having the greatest need. If this is measured in terms of absolute numbers of illiterates, there are nine States which each have more than ten million illiterates in their population and which, collectively, account for over three quarters of the world’s illiterates. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 3, para. 8)

Suffice it to note that illiteracy is often deeply rooted in prevailing social, cultural and economic conditions and closely related to poverty, disadvantage and exclusion. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 5, para. 10)

In the 2002 policy—written after NLS and similar approaches took hold—the term “illiteracy” does not appear at all. The term “non-literate,” which appears only three times (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 8—2 references; p. 6, para. 13), seems to have taken its grammatical place. Although the technical difference in meaning is almost negligible, the tenor of the two terms differs greatly. “Non-literate” is a contemporary, anthropological term (documented first use in 1891)⁴³ that is rarely used in popular speech. While it is a lexical holdout from an autonomous model—it was, for example, the term Goody (1977) used in the revision of his original Great Divide theory of literate/non-literate distinction (it became logical/pre-logical)—it likely appears in 2003 for lack of a better word. “Illiterate,” on the other hand, has been in popular use since the 1500s (OED, 2001) and carries with it an unmistakably stigmatic tone that clearly echoes the autonomous model of literacy. The decisive disappearance of the term “illiteracy” in 2002 is among the most significant indicators of a large-scale

⁴³ See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2001.

rhetorical shift away from the autonomous model. UNESCO is clearly employing terms that resonate with contemporary literacy scholarship.

In keeping with this more contemporary lexicon, the lexical metaphors of war and disease are completely absent from the 2002 text as well, also signaling an apparent discursive shift. At first glance, this shift—since it is away from autonomous-based views of illiteracy—appears to be a move toward an ideological discourse. And in one sense it is. The disappearance of entrenched nineteenth-century metaphors equating literacy and morality is a significant change.⁴⁴ However, the analogies that replace war/disease/quest in the 2003 document are hardly “ideological.” The lexical metaphor that appears most frequently and visibly casts literacy as a “tool”⁴⁵ (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3; p. 9, para. 23)—a neutralized, instrumental metaphor, flanked throughout the policy by similar images, including a step (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 2), a foundation (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3), a thread (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3) and an element (UNESCO, 2002, p. 9, para. 23). The following are examples (emphasis added):

Literacy is the common *thread* that runs through the six [Dakar] goals. Indeed, the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all will ensure that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. Literacy for all is the *foundation* for lifelong learning for all and a *tool* for empowering individuals and their communities. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3)

The right to education, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which literacy is both a crucial *element* and a *tool*, connects

⁴⁴ In contrast to the 1989 policy, the 2002 document’s metaphors are more befitting of a “literacy program,” (rather than a literacy campaign), “which even though planned, systematic and designed-by-objectives, may lack both urgency and fervor” (Arnove & Graff, 1987, p. 3).

⁴⁵ The metaphor of tool typically implies an understanding of literacy as a skill. The term “skill” is used in the 2002 policy (e.g., UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3) in relation to literacy and in relation to “life skills.” In both cases, there is a functionalist and new capitalist logic behind the use of the term (see foregoing discussion of the term “life skill” on page 122 for a detailed explanation of this logic).

with the right to equality (especially gender equality), to development, to health and to freedom of expression. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3)

In the preamble to its resolution 56/116 the General Assembly states it is convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life and represents an essential *step* in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 2)

These metaphors—much less overt than those in the 1989 policy—are part of a controlled, instrumentalized, “techno-rationalist” rhetoric that pervades institutional representations under “new capitalism.” An important aspect of these representations is

the idea of reducing human goals and values to constructs which can be broken down into material tasks, steps, categories, processes, etc., and tackled in systematic ways using appropriate tools, and techniques applied in a means to ends fashion. . . . New capitalism is unfolding in the context of a powerful, intrusive, highly regulatory “techno-rationalist business world view,” which—as manifested in education reform as well as in wider changes at the level of the state—has impacted powerfully on language processes and practices. This world view is an assemblage of values, purposes, beliefs, and ways of doing things that originated in the world of business. It has now been embraced by many governments as the appropriate *modus operandi* for public sector institutions, including those of compulsory and post-compulsory education and training. The logic of this world view is now powerfully inscribed on how literacy is conceived and taught within publicly funded and maintained educational institutions.

The concept of a techno-rationalist business world view is an amalgam of several ideas. The “techno” component refers to privileging technicist approaches to realising social purposes. It captures what critical social theorists call the triumph of technocratic or instrumental rationality within the everyday conduct of human affairs (Aronowitz and Giroux 1993). This is the idea of reducing human goals and values to constructs which can be broken down into material tasks, steps, categories, processes, etc., and tackled in systematic ways using appropriate tools, and techniques applied in a means to ends fashion. It includes such procedures as operationalising qualities (e.g., competence) into measurable and observable behavioural objectives and outcomes; defining values in terms of commodities which can be produced technologically; framing goals in terms of programs, packages, and recipes which can be delivered as means to attainment; and the like. (Lankshear, 1997, pp. 6–7)

In addition to the techno-rationalist metaphor of tool, the 2002 policy also introduces the metaphor of “vision” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, paras. 5, 6). Instead of leading the “quest for a literate world,” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 6, para. 14) as it did in 1989, UNESCO now provides the “the vision for the Literacy Decade” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 6). With its focus on steering processes and ensuring outcomes through proper management, the notion of institutional vision is also a clear indicator of new capitalist discourse. As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, “fast capitalist stress on vision (stemming from charismatic business leaders) is the leading edge of imperialism” (Gee et al., 1997, p. 32) and a key mechanism of new capitalist governance.

In considering the operation of lexical metaphors in the respective policies what is of particular interest is not only what discourses the metaphors evidence but how the metaphors reinforce the discourses’ agendas. Since metaphor “is a term from

one field that is used in another,” (Nicoll, 2004, p. 3) it functions to bring disparate processes and or conditions onto common ground. In so doing, the tenor of the metaphor, what is assumed to be literal or at least ascribed, and the vehicle of the metaphor, what is assumed to be factual (i.e., less literal) or at least borrowed (Richards, 1936), are brought into a relationship of equivalence. In the case of the 1989 policy, the metaphors of war/disease and quest rely on intangible vehicles that invoke a sense of urgency, heroism, adversity, and potential loss of control.⁴⁶ The metaphors in the 2002 policy, by contrast—tool, step, thread, and foundation—rely on everyday vehicles that are familiar, tangible objects that can be used and controlled by the handler—vehicles so familiar, in fact, that they are not easily recognized as metaphorical. Through the use of these vehicles, the metaphors in the 2002 policy not only make the goal of “literacy for all” seem “manageable”—in the techno-rationalist (i.e., new capitalist) sense—but they also situate literacy squarely in the metaphorical “hands” of the individual. Shifting the project of literacy away from the massive undertaking of eradication and combat toward the privatized⁴⁷ manipulation of tools is at once an “autonomous” and a new capitalist move—autonomous in that literacy now involves the individual (i.e., not structural or social) work of those that possess the tools and new capitalist in the sense that the overall project becomes a matter of rationalized, commodified instrumentality. Thus, though the 2002 policy shifts decisively away from the traditional autonomous metaphors of combat and disease—a significant and creditable change—the shift is not convincingly toward an ideological model, as might be expected. The 2002 policy’s metaphors, though less overtly stigmatic, do not leave room for the ideological dimensions of literacy to emerge.

⁴⁶ As the 1989 policy states, UNESCO does not possess the means for accomplishing the “daunting task” of “eradicating illiteracy” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3).

⁴⁷ This type of privatization is thematized in the 2002 document, indicating the operation of new capitalist discourse, and is discussed in more detail below.

Types of Literacy

The conceptual construction of literacy varies between the 1989 and 2002 policies not only in the texts' lexical metaphors, but also in the specific types of literacy included in the policy and the key terms that accompany them. These differences in the text are evidenced through lexical and semantic structures surrounding the following organizing concepts: functional literacy, literacies/literacy practices, and (lifelong) learning, critical thinking, and empowerment. I examine specific types of literacy mentioned in the documents because as these specific types are named, they become textured in patterns of specificity that situates them in positions of salience. Examining the practices that are made salient and those that are not sheds light on what "counts" as literacy in the policy documents.

Functional Literacy. In the 1989 policy, there is a reference to illiteracy "in its different forms" (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3), but the policy names only one particular form—"functional illiteracy" (e.g., 1989, p. 2, para. 3). All other references to literacy are either unmodified or captured in the phrase "universal literacy" (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3; p. 7, para. 20). Mentioned eight⁴⁸ times in the policy, functional illiteracy is described as a problem endemic to "industrialized countries" (e.g., 1989, p. 2, para. 3) one that seems to be peripheral to the main problem of "mass" illiteracy in developing countries. Though the word "functional" is used primarily to modify the term (il)literacy in reference to industrialized countries, the notion of functionalism is the basis of UNESCO's traditional understanding of literacy in all contexts. During much of the latter half of the twentieth century, UNESCO

⁴⁸ (References to the term "functional": UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3; p. 6, para. 16; p. 8, para. 26; p. 9, para. 27, 3 references; p. 11, para. 33; p. 13, para. 39.) Uses of the term functional include the following statements:

It is interesting to note the enormous increase in media coverage of literacy in the industrialized countries in recent years. This is largely the result of the discovery of "functional illiteracy." (UNESCO, 1989, p. 6, para. 16)

Workshop of specialists in Europe on Prevention of Functional Illiteracy and Integration of Youth into the World of Work recommends establishment of network on functional illiteracy for industrialized countries. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 9, para. 27)

widely used the following definition as the basis for policy and public relations: “A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group” (Gray, 1956, p. 19, cited in Wagner, 1999, p. 5). The term “functional” for UNESCO signals a very specific, historicized understanding of literacy:

A traditional approach to conceptualizing literacy is the “functional” or cognitive view, which involves primarily an individual-level perspective and focuses on the simple skills and activities involved in reading and writing by individuals. In this construction, literacy is a competency or personal attribute either absent or present to varying degrees in a given person; group memberships, social environments, culture and other such factors are seen as irrelevant to the definition and assessment of literacy. . . . This conceptualization is probably the primary basis of most popular views of literacy. (Ferdman, 1999, p. 96)

As might be expected, contemporary scholarship (the ideological model in particular) discredits the concept of functional literacy because, in part, the language of “function” disguises and effectively naturalizes the ideological role of literacy in contemporary society. . . . Literacy . . . becomes, then, an organizing concept around which ideas of social identity and value are defined; what kinds of collective identity we subscribe to, what kind of nation we belong to, are encapsulated within apparently disinterested account of the function, purpose and educational necessity of this kind of literacy. Literacy, in this sense, becomes a symbolic key to many of society’s gravest problems . . . thus diverting blame from institutions to individuals, from power structures to personal morality. (Street, 1995, p. 125)

Scholars also object to functional notions of literacy because “functional competence (in literacy) has been defined so that it is merely sufficient to bring its possessor within the reach of bureaucratic modes of communication and authority” (Levine, 1982, p. 261 cited in Wagner, 1999, p. 5), not necessarily within reach of personal/communal priorities. Though the language of function has come under criticism during the last 30 years for being undertheorized and authoritarian, it still carries through the 1989 policy.

In the 2002 policy, however, the term “functional” (in reference to literacy) disappears. As with the term “illiteracy,” the disappearance is abrupt and complete, indicating an apparently deliberate linguistic shift. It is clear that UNESCO, who has traditionally “opted for the rather general notion of ‘functional literacy’” (Wagner, 1999, p. 6), has abandoned the vocabulary of functionalism and thus ostensibly major tenet of the autonomous model of literacy. Important indicators of functionalism, however, are still present in the 2002 policy. For example, literacy as a concept is integrated closely with the use of the term “skill” in various instances (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3; p. 4, para. 8; p. 6, para. 13). The notion of skill is crucial to the operation of functionalist approaches to literacy because it emphasizes the individual, technical aspects of an activity. Interestingly, the term “literacy skill” is not used in the 1989 policy, but it is used twice in 2002:

Indeed, the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all will ensure that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3)

[A goal of “Program Modality”]: (a) Develop programmes which aim at meaningful uses of literacy in addition to the acquisition of the basic literacy skills of reading, writing and numeracy, spanning various age groups from pre-school age to adulthood. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13)

In these quotations, literacy skills are defined as reading, writing, and numeracy, which in an ideal case exhibit characteristics of stability and sustainability. These characteristics reinforce the reification of literacy that corresponds to notions of skill. Besides this reification (which is an indicator of an autonomous discourse), however, what is particularly interesting in these quotations is that there is a division made between the acquisition of “basic” skills of reading, writing, and numeracy and “meaningful” uses of literacy. In this division, or classification, the activities associated with acquisition of basic skills are separate, and by implication, qualitatively different from their uses—in other words, they are not (as) “meaningful.” This system of classification which separates “acquisition” from “use” and “basic” from meaningful is part of a “preconstructed and taken for granted ‘di-vision’” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 130) that functions in the policy in a traditional, autonomous way. While it is not the Great literate/illiterate Divide present in the 1989 document, it is nonetheless an operative binary that partitions those who engage in (basic) acquisition and those who engage in (meaningful) use. As evidenced by the terms “stable” and “sustainable” used to describe literacy skills in the first quotation, this division is likely part of an ongoing Conversation⁴⁹ regarding post-literacy and the retention of literacy skills (i.e., “use them or lose them”),⁵⁰ which is fundamentally a functionalist concern.

⁴⁹ Gee (1999) explains that Conversations (with a capital C), “involve a lot more than words; they involve, in fact, Discourses” (p. 34). Conversations are historic and occur “between and among Discourses, not just among individual people” (Gee, p. 34). Conversations involve language, as Gee states, and “at least the following three non-verbal things”:

1. controversy, that is “sides” we can identify as constituting a debate . . .
2. values and ways of thinking connected to the debate; and
3. the “symbolic” value of objects and institutions that are what we might all non-verbal participants in the Conversation. (pp. 34–35)

Examples of these types of Conversations include, as Gee (1999) mentions, the “Conversation between biology and creationism and the Conversation Los Angeles police department and Latino street gangs. . . . Conversations concentrate on themes and topics as they are “appropriately” “discussable” within and across Discourses at a particular time in history, across a particular historical period, within a given institution or set of them, or within a particular society or across several of them” (p. 37).

⁵⁰ Evidence of this “Conversation” is also found in use of the term “literate environments” and in references to “post-literacy” in the document (see UNESCO, 2002, pp. 5–6, paras. 12–13).

Interestingly, the term “skill” is used in the 2002 policy more frequently in reference to “life skill” than to “literacy skill.” The term “life skill,” which does not appear in the 1989 document, comes from a contemporary orientation to education that focuses on preparing learners to meet their social material needs throughout life.⁵¹ This approach focuses on overtly teaching “skills” that would traditionally be learned through existing processes of socialization. Uses of the term “life skills” in the 2002 document include the following:

[Goal of Dakar Framework] Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes; (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3)

[Goal of Dakar Framework] Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (UNESCO, 2002, p.3, para. 3)

[Expected Outcome] Attainment by all learners, including children in school, of a mastery level of learning in reading, writing, numeracy, critical thinking, positive citizenship values and other life skills. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 9)

[Introduction] The General Assembly states it is convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life and

⁵¹ UNESCO describes “life skills” as follows:

Quality education calls for using a life-skills approach. . . . Learning a variety of skills will prepare individuals for a more successful life at home, in their communities, and in the workforce. People use a variety of skills in the full range of human activities: interacting with family and community members and when acting as an individual, a member of a group, and an employee or entrepreneur. Rather than simply letting individuals learn skills by observing people live and interact around them, educational systems intentionally teach a breadth of skills. In a life-skills approach to education, students become aware of, develop, use, and practice a wide variety of skills within the safety of the learning environment. (UNESCO, n.d., “Contributing to a More Sustainable Future”)

represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 2)

These quotations evidence two important aspects of the relationship between the term “life skills” and the operation of the larger discourses in the text. First, in two of the four instances in which the term appears, it is listed with literacy and numeracy; in one it is listed also with critical thinking and positive citizenship values. By placing life skills in a list with these other terms, the policy sets up a relationship of equivalence between them—“differences between [the terms] are collapsed by [this process of] texturing” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 88). Life skills, which are referred to as “essential,” apparently encompassing all the aptitudes needed for life, then become equivalent to literacy, reading, writing, numeracy, and positive citizenship values. In this way, though the policy does not explicitly equate literacy with social morality, it textures relationships in a way that quietly foregrounds assumed similarities between knowing how to read and write and knowing how to function in all aspects of life (including as a “positive citizen”).

Second, the appearance of the term “life skill” in the policy signals a new capitalist trend toward the commodification of “more intimate and intricate aspects of human life”:

As capital has progressed, more intimate and intricate facets of human activity have become formally commodified. They have been incorporated into the logic of commodity production as saleable products of human activity, or what is commonly defined as labour in political economy. . . . [Terms related to this general tendency] presume forms of labour, which can be bought or sold in order to produce artefacts of conscious experience. . . . As commodities, such artefacts must be alienated from their source (conscious human activity) by a

process of technological objectification, and then made available for trade within our emergent global economy. (Graham, 2002, p. 228)

Though the 2002 policy does not explicitly advocate the trade of life skill within the global economy, it reinforces the idea that the activities of life—in all their intimate and intricate aspects—can be packaged in discrete (marketable) skills. In this way, the notion of life skills is as new-capitalistic as it is functionalist or autonomous.

Additional evidence of the functionalist orientation to literacy is present in the construction of the consequences of literacy in the 2002 text (e.g., 2002, p. 3, para. 2). As in the 1989 policy, literacy in the 2002 document is tied rather ambiguously to a series of pre-determined development outcomes. Consider the following passages (from the 1989 and 2002 policies, respectively):

Suffice it to note that illiteracy is often deeply rooted in prevailing social, cultural and economic conditions and closely related to poverty, disadvantage and exclusion. Hence the struggle for literacy is, at the same time, a struggle for development, justice, greater equality, respect of cultures and recognition of the human dignity of all and the claims of each to an economic, social and political stake in society and the fruits which derive therefrom. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 5, para. 10)

Literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and . . . creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 2)

These passages, commonly echoed in instances of autonomous discourse, rely on a “logic of appearances,” which usually does not “go any deeper than listing appearances which evidence change” rather than an “explanatory logic,” which offers

“explanatory accounts of change in terms of causal relations” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 89). Neither policy explicitly claims that literacy causes a reduction in child mortality or increased gender equality, for instance. But both policies interlace these and other consequences in their discussions of literacy so they appear natural and inevitable. As Fairclough (2003) states, “many contemporary policy texts show this tendency to prefer . . . a logic of appearances over . . . an explanatory logic, and it is worth considering why” (p. 95):

A socio-economic analysis . . . would entail explanation, causality, and expository argument. Without analysis there can be no real understanding . . . and no real sense of contingency—how changing things at one level could produce different possibilities. . . . Many of these texts can be seen to limit policy options by portraying the socioeconomic order as simply given, an unquestionable and inevitable horizon which is itself untouchable by policy and narrowly constrains options, essential rather than contingent.

(Fairclough, 2003, pp. 95–96)

This operative “logic of appearances” in both policy documents reproduces an autonomous discourse. Causal links between literacy and social/material circumstances are not specified, but a vague correlative relationship between them is presented in a way that obscures the structural realities that permit and prohibit social/material access. Thus, where literacy is concerned, both policies “divert . . . blame from institutions to individuals, from power structures to personal morality” (Street, 1995, p. 125). This ongoing functionalist logic is among the indicators of the limits of ideological model’s influence in the 2002 policy.

Literacies/Literacy Practices. Though themes of functionality operate in both documents, the 2002 policy introduces terms that, on the surface, appear to be alternatives to the language of function. These terms, specifically “literacies”

(UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 5) and “literacy practices” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 13), were coined by NLS researchers and intended to capture the multiple, contextual types/uses of literacy envisioned and documented under the ideological model.

UNESCO introduces these terms in the following quotations:

In order to survive in today’s globalized world, it has become necessary for all people to learn new literacies and develop the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information in multiple manners. As recalled in paragraph 8 of the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade, “Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires a renewed vision of literacy.” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 5)

[Under the action area of Research] For deeper insights into the concept of Literacy for All: conduct longitudinal studies on the uses of literacy in schools and communities, and map emerging and new literacy practices in the context of information and communication technologies. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 13)

The novel appearance of the terms “literacies/literacy practices”—neither of which appears in the 1989 document—represent the “recontextualization” (Fairclough, 2003) of scholarly genres of contemporary literacy studies in policy. Since the terms were unmistakably developed by NLS researchers, they embody to some degree the analysis of literacy advocated in the ideological model. However, as seen in the quotations above, the terms are not used to describe marginalized, local literacies—a stated goal of the ideological model (e.g., Street, 1993)—rather, they are used with exclusive reference to advances in information technology and globalization—hallmark symbols of new capitalist discourse (Lankshear, 1997). Exclusive use of the terms “literacies/literacy practices” in this context is significant because the terms take

on a new “situated meaning” (Gee, 1999) in the policy that differs from their situated meaning in New Literacy Studies. This new meaning is a recontextualization or appropriation that narrows the focus of the term to contexts in which globalization and or information/technological advances take place. Though the policy mentions uses of literacy in other contexts (e.g., p. 4, para. 6; p. 6, para. 13), the specific terms “literacies/literacy practices”—conceptual and methodological mainstays of the ideological model—appear to have been “colonized” (Fairclough) by the new capitalist focus on technology, information and globalization. In this way, the document seems to follow policy trends under new capitalism’s expansion: “The whole task set by contemporary education policy is to keep up with rapidly shifting developments in technology” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, cited in Lankshear, 1997, p. 14). The 2002 policy’s emphasis on technology and information as facets of globalization is especially pronounced when compared to themes of technology and information in the 1989 document. In the 1989 policy, the use of technology is mentioned only as a means for teaching literacy, not as an end of literacy instruction, as in the following paragraph (the only one in which technology is mentioned):

An area in which significant “breakthroughs” are possible is that of the application of communication technology to literacy. This is not a new area. For more than 30 years, radio has been extensively and successfully used, particularly in Latin America, to reinforce and supplement literacy instruction. More recently, successful experiments have been conducted in a number of developing countries with the teaching of literacy by television, received either in the home or in community viewing centres. Televised educational programmes for children are commonplace in many countries. In the industrialized nations, instructional programmes are frequently available on videotape and computerized instruction is ever more widely used. There is an

urgent need to make cost-effective technologies more widely available to the developing countries as a means for making more efficient use of limited resources, such as well-trained and highly skilled teachers. Under Subprogramme 1.3.3: “Innovation, technology and research”, Unesco will seek to assist Member States in identifying and, in co-operation with external funding sources, implementing appropriate technologies aimed at expanding educational opportunities for people of all ages. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 13, para. 37)

Technology in the 1989 document is not clearly tied to social or economic change—it is a means for teaching literacy. In the 2002 policy, by contrast, technology is cast as “rapidly changing” and is a major visionary thrust of the policy (as in the vision statement below):

In the rapidly changing world of today’s knowledge society, with the progressive use of newer and innovative technological means of communication, literacy requirements continue to expand regularly. In order to survive in today’s globalized world, it has become necessary for all people to learn new literacies and develop the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information in multiple manners. (UNESCO, p. 4, para. 5)⁵²

In contrast to the 1989 policy in which technology is compartmentalized in one paragraph, statements about technology are woven throughout the policy (in the

⁵² Other references to technology in the 2002 policy include the following statements.

[Under the section entitled “Policy”] Provide a framework for the context-sensitive development of a literate environment, such as...Widening access to tools for expression and communication, such as newspapers, radio, television and information and communication technologies, as well as promoting freedom of expression. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 12)

[Under “Programme Modality] Post-literacy and continuing education programmes for a variety of client groups, including information and communication technology literacy (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13).

[Under Programme Modality] Develop diverse modes of delivery, including the use of information and communication technologies (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13).

In contrast to the 1989 policy in which technology is compartmentalized in one paragraph, these statements are woven throughout the policy (in the sections noted above), making it an ever-present theme. Communication technology is also named as its own form of literacy.

sections noted under footnote 52), making it an ever-present theme. Communication technology is also named as its own form of literacy.

The 2002 policy introduces other forms of literacy as well. Significantly, these new literacies—that is, all the literacies officially named in the 2002 policy that are not mentioned in 1989—have strong new capitalist overtones. The term “numeracy,” for example, appears in 2003 three times (included in sections focused on overarching goals, expected outcomes, and program modality, respectively):

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3)

Attainment by all learners, including children in school, of a mastery level of learning in reading, writing, numeracy, critical thinking, positive citizenship values and other life skills (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 9)

Develop programmes which aim at meaningful uses of literacy in addition to the acquisition of the basic literacy skills of reading, writing and numeracy, spanning various age groups from pre-school age to adulthood. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13)

Like most key terms, numeracy is not defined in the policy, but it appears to involve mastery of math/numerical skills. In the UNESCO-commissioned *International Handbook on Literacy* (1999), the chapter on numeracy states, “Although it is clear that the interpretation of the term numeracy varies greatly in the emerging field of theory and practice, it is also clear that in the overwhelming majority of interpretations the important common element lies in locating numeracy as, in some way, mathematics in use” (Johnston, 1999, p. 242). The chapter points out, “until the last few years . . . numeracy was in fact often unnamed, either subsumed under the wider

category of literacy or accorded a lowly place in the hierarchy of mathematics” (Johnston, p. 246). The emergence of numeracy as its own analytical/pedagogical category has brought new research perspectives related to a variety of issues including assessment, relationships between literacy and numeracy, connections between work and mathematics, and “the relationships between mathematics, technology and power” (Johnston, p. 246).

Besides perhaps invoking these recent “Conversations” (Gee, 1999) regarding numeracy, the 2003 document’s use of the term is a clear indicator of the shift toward a new capitalist discourse. As Johnston (1999) states, “Factors contributing to the growth of an explicit concern with adult numeracy in a range of contexts worldwide [are] the growth of technology, the increasing awareness of the importance of informed citizenship, and the expanding internationalization and competitiveness of industry” (p. 242)—documented indicators of new capitalist regime expansion (Jessop, 2001; Lankshear, 1997). These new capitalist trends necessitate quantitative literacies that enable workers to apply numerical information, keep up with technological advances and participate in the increasingly complex tasks of the global marketplace. One case study of a contemporary workplace describes the emerging importance of numeracy as follows:

Every week, it seemed, engineers or supervisors would invent a new form or revise an old one, most of them designed to enforce careful recording and analysis of data collected on productivity and quality rates. The data were then transferred to computer programs, which generated the myriad graphs and charts that lined the cubicle walls. For the most part, lead workers buckled down and mastered the massive reporting requirements, attending the meetings in which new forms and methods of calculation were introduced, computing their scores and filling out their forms each day after work with a bottle of

“white-out” nearby, and acquiring technological sophistication needed to wade through and modify vast computerized databases. . . . One could say then, that a part of the new working identities of people on the front-line . . . had much to do with literacy and numeracy. (Gee et al., 1996, p. 119)

Besides numeracy, the 2002 policy also introduces other specific new capitalist literacies—“information and communication technology literacy” and/or “information literacy,” which includes “media literacy, legal literacy and scientific literacy” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 133).⁵³ Like numeracy, these new literacies (not mentioned in the 1989 text) are clearly intended to operate within the context of an information or knowledge economy (discussed in more detail below).

Correspondingly, the term “information” in the 2002 policy appears six⁵⁴ times in

⁵³ These particular literacies are mentioned in context of “post-literacy” or “meaningful uses of literacy in addition to the basic literacy skills of reading, writing and numeracy” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13).

⁵⁴ (References to the term “information”: UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 5; p. 6, para. 13, 3 references; p. 7, para. 15, p. 10, para. 4) Uses of the term “information” in the 2002 policy can be divided into two general categories—information as it relates to program development and delivery and information as it relates to learners’ needs vis-a-vis the changing global social/economic order. Examples of the first type of usage are the following:

For the success of the Literacy for All programme, it is necessary to build functional monitoring information systems across various programmes and different levels (institutional/subnational/national/international). The systems should be designed to provide reliable and meaningful information on the status of literacy among the population, on the uses and impact of literacy and on the performance and effectiveness of literacy programmes. The following actions are proposed for building an effective monitoring and evaluation system:

Refine literacy indicators and methodologies to enable countries systematically to collect and disseminate more and better information, with particular attention to providing information on gender gaps. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 8, para. 18)

Provide a framework for the context-sensitive development of a literate environment, such as . . . widening access to tools for expression and communication, such as newspapers, radio, television and information and communication technologies, as well as promoting freedom of expression. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 12)

Examples of the second type of usage are:

[Under “Programme Modality” section] Post-literacy and continuing education programmes for a variety of client groups, including information and communication technology literacy. . . . Information literacy, including media literacy, legal literacy and scientific literacy. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13)

[Under “Research”] For deeper insights into the concept of Literacy for All: conduct longitudinal studies on the uses of literacy in schools and communities, and map emerging and new literacy practices in the context of information and communication technologies. (UNESCO, p. 7, para. 15)

reference to learner abilities and/or skills—in direct reference to types and uses of literacy. In the 1989 policy, by contrast, the term never appears in reference to learners or specific literacies; it is used only in reference to exchanges among institutional actors in the policy.

Learning, Critical Thinking, Empowerment. In addition to new literacies for an information society, the 2002 policy also introduces a new way of conceptualizing literacy education. This conception centers on the concept of “learning,” which involves a lifelong process mediated primarily by the market and the workplace. In the 1989 policy, the term learning does not appear as an express goal of the policy⁵⁵—it has no significance for the intended outcomes of the policy. In 2002 document, by contrast, the term “learning” is used 14⁵⁶ times and appears to have a relationship to literacy that is central to the outcomes of the policy: “Indeed, the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all will ensure that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals and their communities” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3). Despite the apparent importance of learning to the policy, the term is not defined in the document, producing a paradoxical tension that operates in its usage. Consider the following two quotations from the policy:

[Goal of the Dakar Framework] Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable

This second type of usage is not present in the 1989 document in which “information” is used in the 1989 policy only as a medium of exchange for program governance—not as a focus for learners or a component of literacy education (e.g., 1989, p. 2, para. 3; p. 5, para. 12; p. 6, para. 14). The new focus in the 2002 policy on information as an end of literacy education or a reason for engaging in literacy education further evidences the new capitalist focus on promoting the information economy/society. As mentioned above, “information literacy” is named as a specific new form of literacy (not included in the 1989 policy).

⁵⁵ The term “learning” in the 1989 policy appears five times (UNESCO, 1989, p. 7, para. 19; p. 12, para. 36—3 references) but most notably as an adjective (e.g., “learning materials,” 1989, p. 12, para. 36).

⁵⁶ (References to “learning” in the 2002 policy: UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3—5 references; p. 4, para. 7; p. 4, para. 8; p. 5, para. 9; p. 6, para. 13; p. 8, para. 17—2 references; p. 8, para. 18; p. 10, para. 24.)

learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3)

[Vision] Literacy for All will be effectively achieved only when it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture, ensuring gender equity and equality, fulfilling learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 7)

In the first quotation, learning is coupled with “recognized and measurable . . . outcomes,” presumably then, through a shared system of evaluation and/or standards. In the second quotation, learning is tied to “aspirations of local communities,” which, in practice, are not always easily reconciled with “recognized and measurable . . . outcomes.” This tension between standardization and localization (or customization) is amplified by the fact that the policy never specifies what is to be learned, how or, most importantly, for what purposes—central concerns of an ideological model of literacy. This lack of specificity indicates the term is likely used in the policy as a “condensation symbol”—a “substitutive behavior for direct expression, allowing for the ready release of emotional tension” (Sapir, 1937, as cited in Cagle, n.d.). In contrast to a “referential symbol,” an “agreed upon as economical device for purposes of direct reference,” a condensation symbol “stirs vivid impressions involving the [audience’s] basic values” (Cagle). Condensation symbols, by design, cause audiences to “react to the cue rather than to the facts of the situation,” (Cagle) which in the case of learning in the 2002 policy are unclear at best. The policy uses learning, then, as “a symbol [that] arouses and readies [the audience] for mental and physical action,” (Cagle) without having to specify what that action entails.

Interestingly, the verb “to learn” (which requires a subject and a direct object and thus a degree of specificity and accountability), is used only once in the 2002 policy:⁵⁷

In order to survive in today’s globalized world, it has become necessary for all people to learn new literacies and develop the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information in multiple manners. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 5)

In this singular instance, who is learning—“all people”—and what is being learned—“new literacies”—are circumscribed by a clear new capitalist mandate: “to survive in today’s globalized world.” As the only instance in the policy when learning is cast as an infinitive verb and given a specific purpose and context, this quotation signals the operation of a new capitalist discourse that colors the use of the term “learning” in the remainder of the document. This coloring involves an understanding of learning as instrumental to and made possible by the emergence of a globalized economy: “The new capitalist reformer places the world of work at the center of education, not in any old-fashioned sense of ‘job skills,’ but in terms of learning to learn, mastering technical tools, and understanding complex systems.” (Gee et al. 1996, p. 165). The result is that “learning and working are conflating more and more, both because learning is more and more out of sync and out of date when it is off site, and because work changes so quickly that learning a job and doing a job are often practically synonymous” (Gee et al. 1996, p. 165).

The blurring of boundaries between working and learning in the face of technological change has ushered in the concept of “lifelong learning.” Not surprisingly, the term is introduced in the 2002 policy as part of the vision statement

⁵⁷ In all other instances “to learn” is used in reference to “learners” or in its gerund form, “learning.”

and as an aspect of program modality (the concept does not appear in the 1989 document).

[Vision] Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals and their communities. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3)

[Program Modality] In order to achieve Literacy for All and thus Education for All goals, which cut across all age groups in and out of school, literacy programmes must cover the whole life cycle so as to make possible lifelong learning and be gender-sensitive, and must be delivered through both non-formal and formal approaches. They must also be built on the already available literacy programmes and, at the same time, should add newer literacy programmes by forecasting the future literacy needs. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13)

Use of the term “lifelong learning” in these quotations is characteristically ambiguous. Though the terms are not explicitly tied to capitalist goals, they help to scaffold the overall focus within the 2002 policy on the continuous updating of knowledge, skills, and practices. Likely reflective of current educational trends, “lifelong learning has been adopted . . . as a framework for policy and practice, increasingly with the espoused normative goal of supporting the development of a learning society, where the latter is primarily, though not solely, framed within human capital theory” (Nicoll, 2000, p. 7). This approach to learning is thematized in the 2002 policy not only through organizing concepts of lifelong learning and life skills but also through repeated references to technology and information.⁵⁸ As this theme develops, it is clear that literacy education is following production trends in the globalized economy, moving from “standardised mass production to flexible specialisation and increased

⁵⁸ See footnotes 52 and 54 for details on the use of information and technology in the 2002 policy.

innovation and adaptability” (Lankshear, 1997, p. 4).⁵⁹ As the policy makes clear, learners and teachers should then orient themselves to a lifelong process of learning (likely involving re-skilling and thus de-skilling⁶⁰) to meet market demands.⁶¹

The 2002 policy’s orientation to literacy for adaptability and change is reflected in the introduction of two other important terms: “critical thinking” and “empowerment.” Like “learning,” the terms are also likely used in the policy as condensation symbols.⁶² The following are passages in which they appear:

[Vision] Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals and their communities. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3)

[Research] For empowerment of local communities: conduct research in how local communities can participate in literacy programmes and derive benefits from such programmes; (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 15)

[Expected Outcome] Attainment by all learners, including children in school, of a mastery level of learning in reading, writing, numeracy, critical thinking, positive citizenship values and other life skills; (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 9)

⁵⁹ Jessop (2001) explains this trend as follows:

Thus, with the symbolic dethronement of John Maynard Keynes, today’s emblematic economist is Joseph Schumpeter, the theorist of innovation, enterprise, and long waves of technological change. The economic policy emphasis now falls on innovation and competitiveness rather than full employment and planning. (pp. 2–3) . . . Moreover, with the move from the industrial to the post-industrial era, the rise of the knowledge-driven economy, and the increasing importance of the information society with its requirements for *lifelong learning*. (p. 5, emphasis added)

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the capitalist processes of de- and re-skilling and their relationship to education, see Mojab, 2001.

⁶¹ The policy speaks to this process of meeting changing demand in the following quotation: “Literacy programmes must cover the whole life cycle so as to make possible lifelong learning. . . . They must also be built on the already available literacy programmes and, at the same time, should add newer literacy programmes by forecasting the future literacy needs” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13).

⁶² The use of the terms is worth noting not only because of their symbolic role but also because they do not appear in the 1989 policy.

As the quotations above illustrate, “critical thinking” and “empowerment” are used vaguely in the 2002 policy, perhaps more for their affective appeal than for their substance. In the case of critical thinking, the term is textured in a relationship of equivalence, as discussed above, drawing attention to the presumed similarities between it and “reading, writing, numeracy, . . . positive citizenship and other life skills.” It is unclear whether the ordering of the items in the list is intended to be additive or elaborative (one building on the other), but it is clear that there is a connective, perhaps correlative relationship between them. Despite the lack of a clear definition, it appears that critical thinking is part and parcel of an approach to learning that privileges flexible, enterprising subjects (for a flexible, enterprise-driven economy). Still, if this is the case, critical thinking in the new capitalist sense is limited to the interrogation of tactics, not the overall strategy: New capitalism “tends to value critique as a form of creativity leading to the re-engineering of old processes and structures, and the creating of new ones, but limited by an acceptance of new capitalist values” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 165).

In the case of “empowerment,” not only does the policy not indicate what individuals and their communities will/should be empowered for, the term seems to relate only to “participat[ing] and “deriv[ing] benefits” from programs/systems whose authorship is not specified. Given the policy’s focus on the contexts of globalization (discussed in more detail below), it is appropriate to assume that the “situated meaning” (Gee, 1999) of “empowerment” would be coincident with new capitalist goals. In this way, the use of the term is problematic at best:

The terms in which such a slippery and appealing concept as “empowerment” might be problematised are many and varied. With the rise of the concept as part of wider social developments associated with New Right discourses for the re-structuring of society and the economy, the language of “empowerment”

has attracted a number of discussions and critiques (see, for example, Ellsworth, 1989; Heelas & Morris, 1992; Hodkinson, 1994; Troyna, 1994; Avis, 1996). Troyna, for example, locates the use of the term “empowerment” in New Right discourse as an example of appropriation of the emancipatory ideals of the left for contradictory purposes. Arguably, the reasons for this critical attention are linked with the strategic political importance of vocabularies of power in controlling actors’ definitions and orientations towards the power relations which they inhabit. (Bates, 1998, p. 8)

Given the discussion above regarding types of literacy and their attendant uses, it is clear that what “counts” as literacy between the 1989 and 2002 policies has expanded. There is a move from explicit functional literacy (as the only specific literacy named in 1989) to the notion of literacies/literacy practices and the inclusion of other specifically named literacies (e.g., numeracy, information and communication literacy, scientific literacy). This expansion is a feature of an ideological discourse, which relies on the notion that literacies are plural. However, given the ongoing, implicit functionalist elements of the 2002 policy and the fact that all specific types of literacy named have strong new capitalist overtones, the impact of the ideological discourse on constructs of literacy is limited. This limitation is evidenced not only in the types of literacy present in the text, but also in what is absent—specifically an acknowledgment of the ideological dimensions of these literacies. Even terms with strong ideological foundations—“empowerment,” “critical thinking,” “learning”—are deployed in the document in rationalized, presumably neutral ways and are circumscribed by a new capitalist logic.

Contexts of Literacy

Differences between the two policies in the construction of literacy as a concept are evident not only in the types of literacy included but also in the contexts

in/through which these types operate. An examination of context is important in this particular analysis because models of literacy are often evidenced most visibly in discussions of how, when, by whom and for what purposes literacy is practiced. Thus, the ideological model of literacy, for example, explicitly emphasizes context as an important organizing principle. In the 2002 policy, contexts of literacy are significant sites of tension between the discourse of new capitalism and the ideological model of literacy—there is considerable ambiguity surrounding questions of when, how, and for what purposes particular literacies are enacted. Between the 1989 and 2002 policies there is an increased emphasis on the importance of contexts in general (perhaps an ideological move), but many of the specific contexts invoked in the 2002 policy are constructed around new capitalist concerns.

A subtle, but noteworthy, lexical shift related to context is reflected in the disappearance of the term “universal literacy” in the 2002 plan. In 1989, the phrase appears twice as the ultimate goal of the policy:

If universal literacy is to be achieved, it can only be accomplished through an enormous collective enterprise involving governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, hundreds of thousands of communities and hundreds of millions of individuals around the world. The purpose of this document is to set forth the modest but significant contribution which Unesco can make to this vast and essential undertaking.

(UNESCO, 1989, p. 3, para. 3)

Universal literacy will be ultimately achieved if education for all is progressively ensured. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 8, para. 20)

In the 2002 policy, by contrast, the term “universal” does not appear in reference to literacy. Instead, the phrase “Literacy for All”—the formal title of UNESCO’s decade-long program—is used. As the document states, “Literacy policies and programmes

today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires a renewed vision of literacy” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 5). The disappearance of the term “universal” appears to be a move toward constructs of literacy that emphasize multiplicity and contextuality—considerations not apparent under a universalizing paradigm. Whereas “universal” is a “mass term” (Gee, 1989), an artifact of the autonomous model, “All” is an inclusive term that accommodates difference.⁶³ The 2002 policy’s concern with context is evident in other lexical shifts as well. For example, the 2003 text replaces the phrase “literate world,” found in the 1989 policy, with the phrases “literate societies” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 2) and “literate environments”⁶⁴ (e.g., 2002, p. 4, para. 9). The obvious shift from the unitary “world”⁶⁵ to the plurality of “societies” may indicate another move toward acknowledging the varied contexts in which literacies are enacted. These lexical adjustments contribute to an overall tone in the document that is less homogenizing,

⁶³ The distinction between “universal” and “All” corresponds to the distinction between “universal” and “global,” which Gee et al. (1996), citing Bauman (1992), describe as a feature of new capitalism: One of the distinctions between . . . old capitalism, on the one hand, and . . . new capitalism, on the other, is that the former deemed itself *universal*, while the latter thinks of itself instead as *global*. “Behind the change of terms hides a watershed in the history of modern self-awareness and self-confidence. Universal was to be the rule of reason—the order of things that would replace slavery to passions with the autonomy of rational beings, superstition and ignorance with truth. . . . ‘Globality,’ in contrast, means merely that everyone everywhere may feed on McDonald’s burgers and watch the latest made-for-TV docudrama”. (Bauman, 1992, p. 24, as cited in Gee et al., 1996, p. 42)

⁶⁴ Still, perhaps more interesting than the move from “world” to “societies” is the shift from “world” to “environments.” As discussed above, the term “(il)literate” as it is used in the 1989 document is exclusively a human term—it only modifies individuals and groups of people. In the 2003 plan, however, the term applies not only to people but also to objects and physical spaces. On a micro-lexical scale, this is an example of “disembedding,” (originally developed by Giddens, 1991) which Fairclough (2003) explains is “a socio-historical process in which elements which develop in one area of social life become detached from that particular context and become available to ‘flow’ into others” (p. 215). These elements are “so to speak, lifted out of, ‘disembedded’ from, particular networks of social practices where they initially developed, and [become] available as a sort of ‘social technology’ which transcends differences between networks of practices and differences of scale” (pp. 68–69). This process, Fairclough explains, “is a significant feature of globalization” (p. 215).

⁶⁵ The word “world” as it is used here is a collective noun, which denotes a unified group—“the collection considered as a whole” (Bartleby, n.d.). The grammatical constructions that follow collective nouns adhere to properties of singularity—not plurality. As such, the phrase literate world has clear overtones of homogeneity, unity, or solidarity. These overtones resonate with the phrase “universal literacy,” used at times interchangeably with “literate world” in the 1989 document.

more open to plurality—more reflective of a (perhaps ideological) concern with context.

This renewed focus on context is present throughout the 2003 document. On a lexical scale, this shift is substantial: the term “local,” for example, appears twice⁶⁶ in the 1989 policy and 22⁶⁷ times in 2003. The term “context” appears 7⁶⁸ times in 2002 and only once⁶⁹ in 1989. “Community” appears 35⁷⁰ times in 2003 and three times⁷¹ in 1989. The following statement summarizes the 2002 policy’s orientation to local contexts/communities:

⁶⁶ References to “local” in 1989 policy: UNESCO, 1989, p. 6, para. 13; p. 11, para. 32.

⁶⁷ References to “local” in 2002 policy: e.g., 2002, p. 4, para. 4; p. 4, para. 7—2 references; p. 4, para. 9; p. 5, para. 10; p. 5, para. 12; p. 6, para. 13; p. 7, para. 14—5 references; p. 7, para. 15—3 references; p. 8, para. 17—4 references; p. 8, para. 19; Annex—2 references. The 2002 policy’s section on capacity-building, which invokes the term “local” five times, weaving it into relationships with national, regional, and subregional entities, is an example of the primacy of the local in the document:

In order to implement educational programmes as part of the Decade, it is necessary to ensure that various partners and stakeholders have the requisite capacities for running such programmes in a sustained manner in such areas as those listed below:

- (a) Planning and management: organize capacity-building activities for educational planners and decision-makers at regional, subregional, national and local levels, built into ongoing educational programmes, in such areas as fund-raising, programme designing and implementation, multisectoral cooperation, project documentation and reporting;
- (b) Research: design programmes for strengthening the capacity of NGOs, community-based organizations and civil society organizations to carry out action research;
- (c) Training of trainers: identify and support a core group of trainers at regional, subregional, national and subnational levels who can train programme personnel, including teachers and facilitators at the local level;
- (d) Training systems: develop training systems that are gender-sensitive and can be adapted to different contexts and purposes and used at subnational and local levels;
- (e) Curriculum: develop literacy curriculum frameworks at regional, subregional and national levels that can be adapted to local curricula and lesson plans according to the needs of specific learner groups at the local level. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 14)

⁶⁸ (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 6; p. 4, para. 7; p. 5, para. 12; p. 7, para. 14; p. 7, para. 15—2 references; p. 9, para. 23). Examples of the term concept in 2002 include:

[Under the section on “Capacity-building”] Training systems: develop training systems that are gender-sensitive and can be adapted to different contexts and purposes and used at subnational and local levels; (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 14)

[Under the area of “Research”] For research utilization: critically review relevant research in the North and South, for adoption and adaptation of research results for use in policy and practice in new contexts. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 15)

⁶⁹ (UNESCO, 1989, p. 3, para. 6)

⁷⁰ (References to “community” in the 2002 policy: UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 3; p. 4, para. 4; pp. 4–5, para. 9; p. 5, para. 10—4 references; p. 5, para. 11; pp. 5–6, para. 12—3 references; p. 6, para. 13; p. 7, para. 14—4 references; p. 8, para. 17—13 references; Annex.)

⁷¹ (References to “community” in the 1989 policy: UNESCO, 1989, p. 8, para. 24; p. 13, para. 37.) The term “community” appears 15 times in the 1989 document, but 13 of the references are to the “international” or “world community.”

Literacy for All will be effectively achieved only when it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture, ensuring gender equity and equality, fulfilling learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 7)

Even the 2002 document's section on national and international policy—arguably the most difficult in which to integrate local considerations—argues for:

providing a framework for the context-sensitive development of a literate environment, such as [among other things]:

- Promoting multilingual and multicultural education
- Encouraging local literature production (UNESCO, 2002, pp. 5–6. para. 12)

Similarly, the document's section on Program Modality argues for “design[ing] programmes that give learner motivation a high priority by meeting the needs of learners . . . [which includes] . . . building on local languages, knowledge and culture” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 6, para. 13). This focus on learner needs and priorities is fundamentally a contextual concern that references the diverse circumstances surrounding uses of literacy.

In this same vein, the 2002 policy also acknowledges a wider range of learner identities. In the 1989 policy, identity groups given the most attention are the “priority groups” of women and people in least developed countries.⁷² Other groups mentioned, though infrequently, include youth and underprivileged groups, out-of-school children and parents/mothers. The term “illiterate” as a broad category, however, appears to be the most significant identity marker. In the 2002 policy, women as a category are also emphasized, but a greater number of other specific identity groups are mentioned as well:

⁷² (UNESCO, 1989, p. 3, para. 7–8)

Literacy for All focuses on a range of priority groups. In the countries of the South, particularly, women's literacy must be addressed urgently. The priority population groups to be addressed are:

- Non-literate youth and adults, especially women, who have not been able to acquire adequate skills to use literacy for their personal development and for improving their quality of life
- Out-of-school children and youth, especially girls, adolescent girls and young women
- Children in school without access to quality learning so that they do not add to the pool of adult non-literates.

Of the priority population referred to above, certain more disadvantaged groups urgently require special attention, in particular, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, aged people and pre-school children—especially those who have little or no access to early childhood care and education. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 8)

The expansion of the number and range of identity groups may indicate a contextualized understanding that literacy operates in diverse ways across different “communities.” Indeed, along with its regard for identity, the 2002 policy's intensified focus on the implications and uses of literacy in local contexts and communities appears to be a move toward an ideological discourse. As Street explains, “An ‘ideological’ model of literacy . . . is methodologically and theoretically sensitive to *local* variation in literacy practices and is able to comprehend *people's own* uses and meanings of reading and writing” (Street, 1995, p. 149, emphasis added). The ideological model is concerned first and foremost with

the ways in which we can move the study of literacy away from idealized generalization about the nature of Language and of Literacy and towards more concrete understanding of literacy practices in “real” social contexts. . . . That is, reading and writing are here located within the real social and linguistic practices that give them meaning, rather than, as is the case with much sociolinguistic convention, illustrated through hypothetical examples, or as in much educational discourse, represented in idealized and prescriptive terms. . . . The focus on context, then, is what makes the Literacy Practices . . . “real.” (Street, 1995, p. 3)

This intensified focus on local contexts and identities, however, is also a feature of new-capitalist discourse. Whereas the ideological model emphasizes context to account for the social dimensions of literacy practices, new capitalism emphasizes context as a broad move toward the “customization of desire” (Gee et al., 1996). “Old capitalism,” with its cycles of mass production and consumption, functioned around the “democratization of desire” (Gee et al.)—the ideal that consumers could/should share similar consumption patterns—that is, “unifying people through unifying desire. The old capitalism believed that democracy requires solidarity of a sort that transcends subgroup and individual interests. It saw standardized consumption as the basis—in fact the moral basis—for this solidarity” (Gee et al., p. 43).⁷³ Under new capitalism, however, this solidarity has been replaced by “competition around identity” or the “customization of desire”:

[New capitalism] is not about . . . standardization, and very probably not about democracy. The new capitalism is, as we have seen, about customization: the design of products and services perfectly dovetailed to the needs, desires and identities of individuals on the basis of their differences. These differences

⁷³ In the 1989 policy, this solidarity is evidenced in the restricted number of learner identities included in the document and in the overall assuaging of differences in contexts.

may be rooted in their various sub-group affiliations or in their unique individuality. (Gee et al., 1996, p. 43)

This predilection for difference necessarily generates concern with context, locality and identity. Still, the market application of this concern is artificial—“the creation of a local, ‘close to the customer’ image on the part of big businesses which need desperately to please and retain customers” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 157) “is often a protective coloring taken on by very large and global corporations in different contexts” (Gee et al., p. 157).⁷⁴ As such, “the ‘local’ in the new capitalism is a deeply paradoxical notion” (Gee et al., p. 157).

Alongside the plural and perhaps even ideological references to “local,” “contexts,” “environments,” and “societies” in the 2002 policy are singular, unitary references to “knowledge society” and “globalized world,” as in the following statement:

In the rapidly changing world of today’s knowledge society, with the progressive use of newer and innovative technological means of communication, literacy requirements continue to expand regularly. In order to survive in today’s globalized world, it has become necessary for all people to learn new literacies and develop the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information in multiple manners. As recalled in paragraph 8 of the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade, “Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires a renewed vision of literacy. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 5)

⁷⁴ The customization of desire relates to the broad new capitalistic trend toward the “revitalization of scale” (see Jessop, 2000), which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

The introduction of the phrases “knowledge society” and “globalized world”⁷⁵ is quite significant because they appear as part of the policy’s introductory “vision” statement—as part of the over-arching context for literacy envisioned by the policy. Neither of these terms is present in the 1989 document, and though they each appear only once in 2003, they are clear indicators of a new capitalist discourse. “Knowledge society” is an important construct in new capitalism that allows for the commodification and valorizing of aspects of human activity that were previously not subject to a market logic (Graham, 2002). Through discursive devices such as “knowledge society” and/or knowledge economy what people know and what they do with their knowledge is now considered instrumental to the achievement of capitalist goals:

The business world, as part and parcel of massive global economic, technological, and social change, now sees *knowledge* as its primary “value.” Contemporary, globally competitive businesses don’t any longer really compete on the basis of their products or services *per se*. They compete, rather, on the basis of how much learning and knowledge they can use as leverage in order to expeditiously invent, produce, distribute and market their goods and services, as well as to innovatively vary and customize them. Such knowledge is made up of both highly technical components and components dealing with communication, motivation, and social interaction. Similar changes are affecting non-business institutions as well. (Gee et al., 1996, p. 5)

⁷⁵ The terms “knowledge society” and “globalized world” are tied to themes of technology and information discussed above. None of the terms in the 2002 policy operates alone—all of the specific terms analyzed here reproduce and are reproduced by new capitalist discourse. They are analyzed separately here for organizational purposes, but they operate interconnectedly within new capitalist discourse.

The “undialogized”⁷⁶ assumptions that the world is globalized and that it operates as a knowledge society powerfully circumscribe potential contexts and uses of literacy in the policy because the structuring of the phrases leaves no room for an alternative view of the world. The assumption is made effective by two major grammatical strategies. First, the clauses containing the terms “knowledge society” and “globalized world” are unmodalized—there is no “should,” “may,” “can,” “might,” etc. in how the phrases are constructed—they are “epistemic assumptions”⁷⁷ (Fairclough, 2003). Second, “knowledge society” and “globalized world” are nominalizations of the verbs “to know” and “to globalize.” By converting these verbs into adjectives to modify nouns—essentially creating two-word nouns—the policy has dismissed the actors, actions, and circumstances surrounding the processes of knowing (or, perhaps more appropriately, producing and consuming knowledge) and globalizing. Fairclough explains this process as follows:

Although one can say that they are ultimately referencing concrete and particular events, if highly complex sets and series of such events, they represent the world in a way which abstracts away from anything remotely concrete. One corollary of this is that many of the elements of concrete events are excluded. Processes (“globalization,” “aspirations”) and relations . . . and even feelings (“hopes,” “aspirations”)—I shall use process in a general sense to include all of these—are represented, but the people involved are for the most part excluded . . . , as are other elements of social events, such as objects, means, times, places. Processes are in fact “nominalized,” not worded with verbs as they most commonly are, but with noun-like entities called

⁷⁶ Quoting Holquist (1981), Fairclough (2003) explains, “a word, discourse, language or culture undergoes ‘dialogization’ when it becomes relativized, de-privileged, aware of competing definitions for the same things. Undialogized language is authoritative or absolute” (p. 42).

⁷⁷ According to Fairclough (2003), there are three main types of assumptions: existential assumptions: assumptions about what exists; propositional assumptions: assumptions about what is or can be or will be the case; [and] value assumptions: assumptions about what is good or desirable” (p. 55).

“nominalizations” . . . or what one might call “process nouns,” nouns with verb-like quality of representing processes and relations and so forth. (p. 132)

Nominalization characteristically involves the “loss” of certain semantic elements of clauses—both tense (so “destruction” can cover “was destroyed,” “is destroyed,” “will be destroyed,” etc.) and modality (so distinctions between “is,” “may be,” “should be” and so forth are “lost”) . . . such generalization and abstraction, for instance in the genres of governance, can erase or even suppress difference. It can also obfuscate agency, and therefore responsibility, and social divisions. (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 143–144).

Through the unmodalized nominalizations involved in constructing the phrases “knowledge society” and “globalized world,” the policy naturalizes new capitalism and its relationship to literacy in a way that prevents alternative relationships from emerging. Jessop (2001), in his analysis of EU policy documents, describes this process of naturalization as follows:

The language its authors employ tends to naturalize the global neo-liberal project. The changes associated with this project, which have been promoted through concerted economic and political action on a world scale and in which international agencies, national states, and business leaders are heavily involved, are variously represented as natural, spontaneous, inevitable, technological, and demographic. The document takes technological change and globalization as given, de-personalizes them, fetishizes market forces, and makes no reference to the economic, political, and social forces that drive these processes forward. Moreover, the very same processes that cause the problems identified . . . will also solve them—technological change will provide solutions to emerging problems, democratization will occur, population growth

will decline, economic growth will continue, the informal sector will expand to deal with social problems. No-one could infer . . . that technological change and globalization are deeply politicized processes and the object of struggles within the dominant classes, within states, and in civil society. Instead it presumes an equality of position in relation to these changes: they are objective and inevitable, we must adapt to them. Thus, whereas globalization, technological change, and competition are depersonalized, human agency enters in through the need for survival and sustainability. (p. 5)

To the 2002 policy's credit, the vision statement also includes the following paragraph:

Literacy for All has to address the literacy needs of the individual as well as the family, literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in society and in the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries. Literacy for All will be effectively achieved only when it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture, ensuring gender equity and equality, fulfilling learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people. Literacy must be related to various dimensions of personal and social life, as well as to development. Thus, literacy efforts must be related to a comprehensive package of economic, social and cultural policies cutting across multiple sectors. Literacy policies must also recognize the significance of the mother tongue in acquiring literacy and provide for literacy in multiple languages wherever necessary. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 7)

In this paragraph, UNESCO acknowledges the importance of “various dimensions of personal and social life” and the “goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries” to literacy education. These are important, perhaps

ideological acknowledgments. However, the “world” or the “society” in which these goals/dimensions operate is still globalized, as the assumptive moves in opening paragraph of the vision statement make clear. This vision of the world is the context through which subsequent paragraphs must necessarily be interpreted—“the premise upon which the document as a whole can unfold ‘naturally’” (Nicoll, 2000, p. 5).

As the discussion above demonstrates, within the contexts of literacy, the metaphors for literacy and the types of literacy emphasized in the 2002 policy is evidence of the “interdiscursivity” (Fairclough, 2003) of the discourse of new capitalism and the ideological discourse on literacy.⁷⁸ The constructs of literacy that result exhibit hybrid features of the discourses in which ideological aspects are bounded by new capitalist goals. Literacy, for example, is no longer discussed in “autonomous” morally-charged metaphors such as eradication, combat, and quest; it becomes analogous instead to a techno-rationalist tool. Literacy is newly operationalized as a plural concept, but the types of literacies emphasized are decidedly new capitalistic in character. Uses and contexts of literacy expand to include personal and communal priorities, but these priorities are guided by an overall vision for a “globalized world.” This interdiscursivity between new capitalism and the ideological model is further complicated by residual features of the “autonomous” discourse, most evident in the 2002 policy’s implicit focus on functionality. In the end, the interplay between these discourses produces constructs of literacy that, despite linguistic re-packaging, that still revolve around a guiding focus on instrumentality and neutrality.

⁷⁸ “Analysis of interdiscursivity of a text is analysis of the particular mix of genres, of discourses and of styles upon which it draws, and of how different genres, discourses or styles are articulated (or ‘worked’) together in the text” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 218).

Governance of Literacy

As evidenced in the discussion above, the discourse of new capitalism operates powerfully in the construction of literacy as a concept in UNESCO's 2002 policy. The discourse, however, is perhaps even more evident in structures and processes of governance related to literacy education in the policy. The new capitalist features of these systems and processes are especially apparent when compared to features of governance in the 1989 policy. The following section traces the development of new capitalist discourse through the 2002 policy, focusing specifically on the proposed forms of governance for literacy education. The analysis argues that new capitalist discourse is central to the regulatory structures and processes for the U.N. Decade of Literacy beginning in 2003. Evidence in support of this argument includes the texturing of the features of new capitalism summarized in Table 4 and discussed in detail below.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ For heuristic and/organizational purposes, the "indicators" of new capitalist discourse found in Table 2 have been organized into the three categories listed in the first column of Table 4: De-nationalization of Statehood, De-and re-territorialization and De- and re-statization. These are not fixed categories—there is a great deal of overlap between the various dimensions of the discourses in each category.

Table 4. Evidence of New Capitalist Discourse in UNESCO's Proposed System of Governance for Literacy Education

INDICATOR OF NEW CAPITALISM	TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
De-nationalization of Statehood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diminished role of “Member States” ▪ National governments one among equals in “broad coalition”
De- and Re-territorialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Power shifted upward, downward, outward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UNESCO steering position ○ Enhanced role of community ○ Participation thematized
De- and Re-statization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emphasis on partners ▪ Increased participation of private sector (overall move to individualize) ▪ Heterarchy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Move from “cooperation” to “coordination” ○ Focus on “vision” ○ Mixed scale strategies

Denationalization of Statehood

A hallmark characteristic of new capitalism is the “‘hollowing out’ of the national state, or in more formal terms, as the denationalization of statehood” (Jessop, 2000, p. 350). Under Atlantic Fordism—or the most recent previous form of “old capitalism”—the “primacy of the national scale in the advanced capitalist economies” (Jessop, p. 350) was well-defined. Corporations were tied closely to national governments that were largely responsible for the flow of goods and services within and across their borders. On an international scale, political and economic strategy/action was controlled to a large degree by national allegiances. “When in the

old capitalism, corporations were tied (though never totally) to nation states, the citizens of these nations stood some chance of benefiting as citizens from the prosperity of corporations” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 44).

With the acceleration of new capitalism, however, “national economies no longer comprise the unit of analysis or strategic frame of reference for companies and workers” (Lankshear, 1997, p. 5). “The growing mobility of capital over a range of transnational scales” (Jessop, 2000, p. 350) has increased “the porosity of borders to many different kinds of flow” (Jessop, p. 350). As such, “states find it increasingly hard, should they want to, to contain economic, political and social processes within their borders or to control flow across these borders” (Jessop, p. 350). Unable to “react according to [their] own routines and modes of calculation,” many “state managers feel the pressures of globalization and believe they have lost operational autonomy” (Jessop, p. 350). This “weakens the capacity of national states to confine capital’s growth dynamic within a framework of national security . . . of national welfare . . . or of some other national matrix” (Jessop, p. 331).

Textual evidence of the diminishing relevance of the national scale is clear in comparing the two UNESCO policy documents. In 1989 the term “state” (used most frequently in reference to U.N. Member States—a phrase not used in the 2002 policy at all) is used 59⁸⁰ times; in the 2003 document, the term appears only twice. Similarly, the term “country” or “countries” is used 57⁸¹ times in 1989 compared with

⁸⁰ (e.g., 1989, p. 10, para. 30; p. 11, para. 32; p. 12, para. 34.) Examples of the use of the term “State” in 1989 include:

The purpose which the General Conference has established for the Plan of Action is to help Member States in their struggle against illiteracy. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 3, para. 8)

Provide more effective technical co-operation to Member States, including in particular an enhanced flow of documents and information on national experiences and a reinforcement of training activities for national specialists. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

The achievements of the regional programmes have amply demonstrated their value and validity and justify the strong attachment of the Member States of the respective regions to them. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 10, para. 28)

⁸¹ (e.g., UNESCO, 1989, p. 6, para. 18; p. 7, para. 22; p. 10, para. 28.) Examples of “country” in the 1989 policy include:

11⁸² times in 2002. Though both documents contain explicit reference to national governments, there is a clear shift in the responsibility assigned to state-level actors and in the prominence of the state in executing plans/policies. The 1989 policy, for example, asserts unequivocally:

Unesco cannot directly combat illiteracy. This is the responsibility of Member States, as the General Conference has recognized on numerous occasions. It is they who must take the necessary decisions, make the plans, set priorities and targets, allocate resources and see that programmes are effectively implemented. . . . Unesco “cannot by any means claim to overcome illiteracy single-handed” (para. 104), but must play its essential part by encouraging and facilitating action by governments and other partners. Thus, the Plan of Action is essentially a plan for encouraging, facilitating and assisting action by Member States. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1, para. 1)

The 2002 policy also mentions the importance of states in executing the policy, but the emphasis on their role is comparatively reduced. The following quotation—the

At the same time, the situation in those countries having large numbers of illiterates will be monitored and, on request from national authorities, co-operation provided on a priority basis, when required. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 4, para. 8)

Indeed, in certain countries ill-conceived “adjustment programmes” have had a destructive impact on education. In these countries, there is an urgent need to undo the damage before progress will be possible. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 7, para. 18)

Progress towards regional goals is evidently the consequence of the success of national efforts. But, in many countries, these efforts are faltering because of the economic crisis which has severely restricted the development of educational programmes. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 10, para. 28)

⁸² (References to “countries” in the 2002 policy: UNESCO, 2002 p. 4, para. 7; p. 4, para. 8; pp. 4–5, para. 9—2 references; pp. 5–6, para. 12; p. 7, para. 16—2 references; p. 8, para. 17; p. 8, para. 18; p. 9, para. 21; Annex.) Examples include:

Literacy for All has to address the literacy needs of the individual as well as the family, literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in society and in the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 7)

Literacy for All focuses on a range of priority groups. In the countries of the South, particularly, women’s literacy must be addressed urgently. (UNESCO, 2002, p. para. 8)

Literacy for All thrust of Education for All will yield the following outcomes: Significant progress towards the 2015 Dakar goals 3, 4 and 5, in particular, a recognizable increase in the absolute numbers of those who are literate among. . . . Excluded pockets in countries that are otherwise considered to have high literacy rates (UNESCO, 2002, pp. 4–5, para. 9)

strongest related to state responsibility—is buried several pages in the document as part of a relatively brief statement on national implementation:

The State must play the central and crucial role in planning, coordinating, implementing and financing programmes for Literacy for All. In order to fulfill this role, the State must build symbiotic partnerships with a variety of stakeholders. It is therefore necessary to mobilize the local communities, NGOs, teachers' associations and workers' unions, universities and research institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders to contribute to and participate in all stages of literacy programmes. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 8, para. 19)

The quotation above illustrates a fundamental aspect of the denationalization of statehood—that “the state apparatus is often only the first among equals” (Jessop, 1997a, p. 575). The 2002 policy locates states among a list of actors repeated throughout the document⁸³ that all appear to have the same impact on policy outcomes. In the 1989 policy, by contrast, other institutional actors are mentioned, but much less frequently (and when they are mentioned, they are at times identified in reference to their governmental status—i.e., non-governmental, inter-governmental).⁸⁴ In the 1989 policy, the actions of these organizations are intended only to support the preeminent role of member states:

It must be realized, however, that these actions will be fruitful only to the extent that they set in motion a vigorous dynamic within Member States resolutely oriented towards the eradication of illiteracy in the shortest possible time and supported by a firm political determination and an energetic mobilization of resources and wills. The obligation of Unesco, and of the

⁸³ (e.g., 2002, p. 4: para. 4; p. 4, para. 7; p. 8, para. 19)

⁸⁴ (e.g., 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

international community as a whole, is to encourage, facilitate and support action at the national level. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 6, para. 14)

Further evidence of the denationalization of statehood is apparent in the strategies/goals stated in each policy (UNESCO, 2002 and 1989, listed respectively):⁸⁵

[2002:] In order to attain the above-mentioned outcomes, the implementation process of the Literacy Decade needs to be focused on the following actions as principal strategies, which are essential for attaining and maintaining the outcomes but are largely overlooked currently:

- (a) Placing literacy at the centre of all levels of national education systems and developmental efforts;
- (b) Adopting a two-pronged approach, giving equal importance to both formal and non-formal education modalities with synergy between the two;
- (c) Promoting an environment supportive of uses of literacy and a culture of reading in schools and communities;
- (d) Ensuring community involvement in literacy programmes and their ownership by communities;
- (e) Building partnerships at all levels, particularly at the national level, between the Government, civil society, the private sector and local communities, as well as at the subregional, regional and international levels;
- (f) Developing systematic monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels, supported by research findings and databases. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 10)

[1989:] The aims of the Plan of Action are:

- (i) to alert world public opinion to the scope and magnitude of

⁸⁵ Compare also the “Priority Groups” in each plan (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 4; 1989, p. 3, paras. 8–9). Both plans mention countries or groups of countries as important priority groups, but the 2002 plan names multiple, specific groups within and across countries in a way that makes national boundaries appear less relevant.

illiteracy—in its different forms—and to the danger this poses to the harmonious development of society;

- (ii) to rally the international community to the cause of literacy in order to ensure a conducive environment for literacy work within Member States and international solidarity among them;
- (iii) to pursue, with increased resources and resolve, the regional projects and programmes for combating illiteracy, including the extension and strengthening of the network based at the Unesco Institute for Education (Hamburg) for exchanging experiences in preventing and combating functional illiteracy in the industrialized countries; and
- (iv) to provide more effective technical co-operation to Member States, including in particular an enhanced flow of documents and information on national experiences and a reinforcement of training activities for national specialists (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

While national education systems function as strategic outposts in both sets of goals, there is an expansion of the levels of involvement in the 2002 policy. The 1989 policy, for example, centers evaluation efforts on the “national experiences and a reinforcement of training activities for national specialists” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3). The 2002 policy sets out to develop “systematic monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 10). The 1989 policy aims to “rally the international community to the cause of literacy in order to ensure a conducive environment for literacy work within Member States” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3), while the 2002 policy aims to ensure “community involvement in literacy programmes and their ownership by communities” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 10).

As these quotations indicate, there is a clear sense that the “problem of illiteracy” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 4, para. 10) in the 1989 plan is owned by individual

states: “The purpose which the General Conference has established for the Plan of Action is to help Member States in *their* struggle against illiteracy” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 3, para. 8, emphasis added). Accordingly, the benefits of literacy also belong to particular states, defined in terms of their contribution to national development: “Unesco’s most essential service to literacy is to keep the cause high on the public agenda and, in particular, to inform and sensitize decision-makers concerned with economic and social development, in both the public and private sectors, of the many and important ways literacy contributes to national development” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 5, para. 11). In the 2002 policy, contrastingly, literacy is the responsibility of a “broad coalition,” of which states are merely a part:

The plan of action builds on the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade (A/56/114 and Add. 1-E/2001/93 and Add.1) and articulates essential requirements and the focus of actions for the successful implementation of the Literacy Decade as a thrust of Education for All efforts. It aims to stimulate action taken by national Governments, local communities, individuals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, public and private organizations and civil society in their broad coalition. It also aims to mobilize international agencies and national Governments for forging global commitments. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 4)

As such, the benefits of literacy are not located within a national matrix, but rather are manifest through individuals and their communities:

“Indeed, the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all will ensure that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals and their communities” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3).

De-and Re-territorialization

The diminishing relevance of the national scale (the “hollowing out” of the nation-state) apparent when comparing the 1989 and 2002 policies, takes place alongside new capitalist processes of “de- and re-territorialization” (Jessop, 2000, p. 352): “The complex articulation of global-regional-national-local economies is linked to the transfer of powers previously exercised by national states upwards to supra-regional or international bodies, downwards to regional or local states or outwards to relatively autonomous cross-national alliances among local metropolitan or regional states with complimentary interests” (Jessop, p. 352). In the 2002 policy, the downward transfer of power is seen in the increased focus on community. In the 1989 policy, there are three brief, rather parenthetical statements about community participation:

The aim in both cases is to mobilize NGOs for literacy and facilitate inter-NGO co-operation. Non-governmental organizations—especially those working at the community level—have a unique capacity to design, test and implement innovative programmes. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 8, para. 24)

[The goal of universal literacy] can only be accomplished through an enormous collective enterprise involving governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, hundreds of thousands of communities and hundreds of millions of individuals around the world. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

[Successful programs require] ways of financing and managing educational development, particularly through the fuller participation of local communities (UNESCO, 1989, p. 11, para. 32)

In the 2002 policy, by contrast, community participation is emphasized throughout the document and is given its own key action area:⁸⁶

Community participation:

The success of the Literacy for All programme depends on the extent of the involvement of the local community in the programme and the willingness of the local community to take on the ownership of the programme. It is important that the Government should not seek community involvement as a cost-cutting strategy and it must be remembered that occasional campaigns and festivals do not ensure community participation in educational programmes.

Some of the steps in securing community participation are the following:

- (a) Document experiences of governmental organizations, NGOs and the private sector regarding community participation in literacy programmes;
- (b) Provide technical and financial support for sustaining community-based programmes of literacy;
- (c) Create subnational/national networks of NGOs working with local communities for literacy;
- (d) Encourage local communities to organize community learning centres;
- (e) Share experiences of successful community learning centre programmes among countries;
- (f) Develop appropriate tools for communication between Governments and communities as well as among communities, including the use of information and communication technologies. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 8, para. 17)

As explained in the action area, communities are positioned in the policy to assume programmatic governance in ways not presented in the 1989 policy. The parameters of

⁸⁶ As mentioned in the previous section, references to the term “community” more than double between 1989 and 2002.

action for communities, however, are not explicitly defined, indicating a loose operational autonomy.

The upward transfer of powers associated with de- and re-territorialization is also evident in the 2002 policy. UNESCO, acting as the international and supra-regional body, takes a more active role in guiding the activities of the decade than it did in 1989. For example, the 1989 policy states that it is not a “blueprint for building a literate world. Unesco does not possess the means to take on so daunting a task. . . . Unesco cannot directly combat illiteracy. This is the responsibility of Member States. . . . It is they who must take the necessary decisions, make the plans, set priorities and targets, allocate resources and see that programmes are effectively implemented . . . the Plan of Action is essentially a plan for . . . assisting action by Member States” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1, para. 1). In 2002, by contrast, UNESCO sets specific priorities and outlines the vision for the Decade, addressing key areas of action in a procedural fashion. Rather than pitching activities at the national level, UNESCO focuses on a world-inclusive effort, “aim[ing] to mobilize international agencies and national Governments for forging *global* commitments” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 4, emphasis added). Accordingly, the 2002 document is laid out as a plan, with UNESCO situated in a position of oversight. The 1989 plan, by contrast, reads more like a general discussion of the Decade, with priorities and plans suggested periodically throughout.

De- and Re-statization

Along with processes of de- and re-territorialization in the 2002 document are new capitalist processes of de- and re-statization: “This involves the reallocation of functions across the internal demarcation between public and private responsibilities within each territorialized political system” (Jessop, 2000, p. 352)—“a movement from the central role of official state apparatus in securing state-sponsored economic

and social projects and political hegemony towards an emphasis on partnerships between governmental, para-governmental and non-governmental organizations. . . . This involves the complex art of steering multiple agencies, institutions and systems which are both operationally autonomous from one another and structurally coupled through various forms of reciprocal interdependence” (Jessop, 1997a, pp. 574–575). “This is often described as a shift from *government* to *governance*” (Jessop, 2000, p. 352). Evidenced in the processes of de- and re-statization, this shift involves an intensified focus on lateral partnerships, an increased role for the private sector, and a trend toward heterarchical steering rather than hierarchical government. Each of these elements is present in the 2002 policy.

First, the 2002 policy, when compared with 1989, exhibits an increased emphasis on partnerships. References to the term “partners” more than double between the two documents (6 in 1989 and 13 in 2002). More important, building partnerships is one of six principle strategies on which the 2002 policy centers: “Building partnerships at all levels, particularly at the national level, between the Government, civil society, the private sector and local communities, as well as at the subregional, regional and international levels” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 10). In 1989, the corresponding strategy focuses on efforts within member states and among them, rather than efforts mediated by lateral partnerships: “to rally the international community to the cause of literacy in order to ensure a conducive environment for literacy work within Member States and international solidarity among them” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3). The intensified focus on partnerships in the 2002 policy coincides with the introduction of the term stakeholder (invoked six times in the document;⁸⁷ never mentioned in the 1989 policy). As an artifact of techno-rationalist

⁸⁷ (References to “stakeholder” in the 2002 policy: UNESCO, 2002, pp. 4–5, para. 9; p. 7, para. 14; p. 8, para. 19; Annex 1.) Examples of “stakeholder” in the 2002 policy include:

business rhetoric, the metaphor of stakeholder involves an understanding of a shared claim on the problems and benefits of the situation. The term is used to summon participation from multiple levels and across multiple sectors. Accordingly, participation is a strong theme throughout the 2002 document.⁸⁸

Following the general theme of participation, new types of partners are introduced in the 2002 policy, including “local communities . . . teachers’ associations and workers’ unions, universities and research institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders” (2002, p. 8, para. 19). Among these partners, private sector organizations play a significant role—another indication of de- and re-statization. In the 1989 policy, the private sector is mentioned only once:

[Under “Expected Outcomes”] National Governments, local authorities, international agencies and all stakeholders are to ensure that by the end of the Literacy Decade, the Literacy for All thrust of Education for All will yield the following outcomes. (UNESCO, pp. 4–5, para. 9)

[Under “Capacity-building”] In order to implement educational programmes as part of the Decade, it is necessary to ensure that various partners and stakeholders have the requisite capacities for running such programmes in a sustained manner in such areas as those listed below (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 14,

[Under Implementation at National Level] The State must play the central and crucial role in planning, coordinating, implementing and financing programmes for Literacy for All. In order to fulfill this role, the State must build symbiotic partnerships with a variety of stakeholders (para. 19)

⁸⁸ (UNESCO, 2002 p. 3, para. 2; p. 3, para. 3; pp. 4–5, para. 9—2 references; p. 5, para. 11; pp. 5–6, para. 12; p. 7, para. 15; p. 8, para. 16; p. 8, para. 17—4 references; p. 8, para. 19; pp. 9–10, para. 24.) Participation is emphasized throughout the document. Examples of the term “participation” in the document include the following:

[Under “Community Participation”] The success of the Literacy for All programme depends on the extent of the involvement of the local community in the programme and the willingness of the local community to take on the ownership of the programme. It is important that the Government should not seek community involvement as a cost-cutting strategy and it must be remembered that occasional campaigns and festivals do not ensure community participation in educational programmes. (UNESCO, p. 8, para. 17)

[Under “Implementation at National Level”] It is therefore necessary to mobilize the local communities, NGOs, teachers’ associations and workers’ unions, universities and research institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders to contribute to and participate in all stages of literacy programmes. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 8, para. 19)

[Under “Introduction”] Indeed, the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all will ensure that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para 3)

As these quotations indicate, participation in the 2002 document is emphasized as a means for successful programming as well as an end of literacy education—“literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 3, para. 2).

Unesco's most essential service to literacy is to keep the cause high on the public agenda and, in particular, to inform and sensitize decision-makers concerned with economic and social development, in both the public and private sectors, of the many and important ways literacy contributes to national development. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 5, para. 11)

In 2002, by contrast, roles for private sector organizations are mentioned 9 times⁸⁹; their involvement is included in sections related to principal strategies, policy, community participation, national implementation, and resource mobilization. The growing preeminence of the private sector in the policy follows general new capitalist trends in which capital reproduces itself in part by becoming increasingly active in public spaces.⁹⁰ The 2002 policy appears to operate “at the centre of [this] indissolubly mixed public-private space” (Jessop, 2000, p. 334) in which accountability is complicated by diffuse systems of organization.

Increased roles for private sector actors in the 2002 policy are part of a larger move toward privatization that operates on various levels within the 2002 document. Not only are certain aspects of governance allocated to private organizations, but there is a devolution of responsibility to private individuals. This trend, perhaps the most definitive form of privatization, is reflected in the differential use of the term

⁸⁹ (References to the private sector in the 2002 policy: UNESCO, 2002, 4, 10, 12—2 references, 17, 19, 22, Annex—2 references.) Examples include:

[The plan of action] aims to stimulate action taken by national Governments, local communities, individuals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, public and private organizations and civil society in their broad coalition. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 4)

Develop a policy framework and incentive scheme that ensures multi-ministerial collaboration as well as a financing scheme to enhance literacy programmes in formal, non-formal and informal education, spelling out expected roles of the private sector, civil society and individuals (UNESCO, 2002, pp. 5–6, para. 12)

Engage communities (including community-based organizations, families and individuals), civil society organizations, universities and research institutes, mass media and the private sector in providing input into literacy policy (UNESCO, 2002, pp. 5–6, para. 12)

⁹⁰ As Jessop (2000) explains, “The withdrawal of the state is compensated by capital’s increasing resort to networking and other forms of public-private partnership” (pp. 335–336).

“individual” between the 1989 and 2002 policies. In the 1989 document the term is used only once:

If universal literacy is to be achieved, it can only be accomplished through an enormous collective enterprise involving governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, hundreds of thousands of communities and hundreds of millions of individuals around the world. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 2, para. 3)

In this quotation, individuals—grouped in hundreds of millions—are instrumental to accomplishing the collective goal of universal literacy—the enterprise and the benefits are measured in mass. In the 2002 policy, by contrast, the responsibilities and benefits of the literacy enterprise function expressly for individuals, as evidenced in the quotations below:

Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals and their communities. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 3)

Literacy for All has to address the literacy needs of the individual as well as the family, literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in society and in the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 7)

Develop cost-effective methods for assessing literacy levels of individuals for use in literacy surveys, as well as in the regular evaluation of learning outcomes at the programme level.⁹¹ (UNESCO, 2002, p. 8, para. 18)

Individuals are mentioned in the 2002 policy in relation to the vision, policy and monitoring and evaluation. Indeed individuals and their resources are a key factor in

⁹¹ In the 1989 policy, evaluation and assessment is a mass undertaking. Individuals are not mentioned in this process. Here, though mass evaluation will clearly take place, the individual is mentioned as the clear focal point, as the quotation indicates.

the development of the plan; they a part of the action and are, by implication, accountable for results:⁹²

[The plan] aims to stimulate action taken by national Governments, local communities, individuals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, public and private organizations and civil society in their broad coalition. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 4)

Develop a policy framework and incentive scheme that ensures multi-ministerial collaboration as well as a financing scheme to enhance literacy programmes in formal, non-formal and informal education, spelling out expected roles of the private sector, civil society and individuals. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 12)

Engage communities (including community-based organizations, families and individuals), civil society organizations, universities and research institutes, mass media and the private sector in providing input into literacy policy. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 12)

In summoning the input of individuals, the policy presumably opens itself to enhanced participation, which, in some instances, is a feature of ideological approaches to literacy education. However, the rhetoric of individualism/privatization also obscures important structural relationships that ought to be accounted for in an ideological paradigm. In the 2002 policy, for example, individuals are put on par with “national Governments, local communities . . . nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, public and private organizations and civil society” through a textured relationship of equivalence (as discussed above). This relationship, whose specific configuration is not defined, implies that individual actors and institutional actors have equal influence on policy outcomes. Whether or not this is in reality the case, the

⁹² (References to individuals in the 2002 policy: UNESCO, 2002, p. 3–4, para. 3; p. 4, para. 4; p. 4, para. 7; pp. 5–6, para. 12—2 references; p. 8, para. 18.)

relationship of equivalence disguises the tension between structure and agency that is key to an ideological understanding of literacy education. This trend toward individualization in the 2002 plan resonates with the idea that “the new capitalism is fundamentally about privatization.” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 35) . . . “Privatization throws all of us—and is meant to—on our own resources, or on our (perhaps temporary) ‘team’ or ‘tribe,’ demanding that we take responsibility for our own lives” (Gee et al., p. 35).

Coincident with themes of privatization is the emergence of “heterarchy” or “self-organization” (Jessop, 1998) as a primary governance system in the 2002 policy. This third process of de- and re-statization includes “self-organization of personal networks,⁹³ negotiated inter-organizational co-ordination, and de-centered, context-mediated inter-systemic steering” (Jessop, p. 29):

[Heterarchy] involves the coordination of differentiated institutional orders or functional systems (such as economic, political, legal, scientific, or educational systems), each of which has its own complex operational logic such that it is impossible to exercise effective overall control of its development from outside the system. . . . This does not exclude specific external interventions to produce a particular result; it does exclude control over that result’s repercussions on the wider and longer-term development of the whole system. . . . Inter-systemic co-ordination is typically de-centered and pluralistic and depends on specific forms of governance. (Glagow & Willke, 1987, as cited in Jessop, p. 30)

In the 2002 policy increased reliance on heterarchy is evidenced in several ways. First, from 1989 to 2002 there is a move from “co-operation” to “co-ordination.”⁹⁴ This shift

⁹³ Personal networks are not evident in a policy context, so they will not be discussed here.

⁹⁴ The term “cooperation” (in one of its forms) appears 33 times in 1989 and 6 times in 2002. The term “coordination” (in one of its forms) appears twice in 1989 and 8 times in 2002.

indicates a more rationalized approach to governance, involving the steering of perhaps disparate processes or entities that work from different operational logics. As Jessop (1998) explains, heterarchical processes emerge “where materially interdependent but formally autonomous organizations, each of which controls important resources must *co-ordinate* their actions to secure a joint outcome which is deemed mutually beneficial. To this end they negotiated to identify common objectives and engage in positive *co-ordination* to achieve these aims” (p. 36, emphasis added). The material interdependence of organizations in the 2002 policy and their coordination of resources are apparent in the following quotation:

As the coordinating agency at the international level for the achievement of the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All, as well as for the Literacy Decade, UNESCO will work within the Education for All coordination mechanism already established, through which it will identify literacy components in the ongoing development programmes of various international and bilateral agencies and forge joint mobilization and maximum use of resources among these agencies in support of the Decade. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 9, para. 23)

Besides the coordination of resources, heterarchy also involves “the coordination of differentiated institutional orders or functional systems (such as economic, political, legal, scientific, or educational systems), each of which has its own complex operational logic” (Jessop, 1998, p. 30). The following passage is an example of UNESCO’s attempt to heterarchically coordinate different functional systems and logics:

The United Nations system as a whole sets the promotion of literacy in the context of human rights, seen as indivisible and interdependent. The right to education, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which

literacy is both a crucial element and a tool, connects with the right to equality (especially gender equality), to development, to health and to freedom of expression. United Nations agencies as well as the World Bank engaged in these various sectors recognize these connections and frequently include literacy as one of the problems to be addressed and solved in conjunction with the fulfilment of other rights. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 9, para. 23)

In this quotation, separate functional systems related to health, development and human rights are coordinated through the logic of “equality.” UNESCO seeks to “connect” these systems to the universal right to education, thus bringing the functional disparities onto common ground.

This type of “inter-systemic steering” involves a decentralization of responsibility and accountability that is seen in the introduction of “capacity-building” in the 2002 policy. The concept, which does not appear in 1989, is a key area of action and is summarized as follows in the 2002 plan:

Capacity-building:

In order to implement educational programmes as part of the Decade, it is necessary to ensure that various partners and stakeholders have the requisite capacities for running such programmes in a sustained manner in such areas as those listed below:

(a) Planning and management: organize capacity-building activities for educational planners and decision-makers at regional, subregional, national and local levels, built into ongoing educational programmes, in such areas as fund-raising, programme designing and implementation, multisectoral cooperation, project documentation and reporting;

- (b) Research: design programmes for strengthening the capacity of NGOs, community-based organizations and civil society organizations to carry out action research;
 - (c) Training of trainers: identify and support a core group of trainers at regional, subregional, national and subnational levels who can train programme personnel, including teachers and facilitators at the local level;
 - (d) Training systems: develop training systems that are gender-sensitive and can be adapted to different contexts and purposes and used at subnational and local levels;
 - (e) Curriculum: develop literacy curriculum frameworks at regional, subregional and national levels that can be adapted to local curricula and lesson plans according to the needs of specific learner groups at the local level.
- (UNESCO, 2002, p. 7, para. 16)

By building the capacity of organizations and individuals at different levels for the purpose of self-organization, UNESCO is providing the “decentered,”⁹⁵ context-mediated” (Jessop, 1998) approach to governance typical of new capitalist heterarchy. This approach resonates with processes of economic and social organization under new capitalism that privilege innovation and change. “Whereas Atlantic Fordism emphasized productivity and planning, post-Fordist discourses emphasize flexibility and enterprise” (Jessop, 1997b, p. 1). Within a paradigm of innovation, organizations furnished with “capacity” can adapt to change more efficiently than organizations

⁹⁵ Compare the centralized approach in 1989. Powers are clearly concentrated on nation states, as exemplified in the following quotation:

Unesco’s actions aim at creating a supportive environment for education, encouraging action within Member States and co-operation among them, and enhancing technical co-operation with and financial and material support to countries confronting the challenge of mass illiteracy. It must be realized, however, that these actions will be fruitful only to the extent that they set in motion a vigorous dynamic within Member States resolutely oriented towards the eradication of illiteracy in the shortest possible time and supported by a firm political determination and an energetic mobilization of resources and wills. The obligation of Unesco, and of the international community as a whole, is to encourage, facilitate and support action at the national level. (UNESCO, 1989, p. 16, para. 46)

simply given directives. Thus capacity-building is an important element of new capitalist governance.

As a governance strategy, capacity-building relies on the existence of a central organizing set of values or goals on which capacity-infused units can operate. These values/goals are often inculcated through an emphasis on “vision.” In heterarchical governance, “inter-systemic consensus around visions or missions . . . provide a basis for more specific inter-organizational arrangements oriented to positive co-ordination of relevant activities around specific objectives” (Jessop, 1998, p. 36). As discussed above, the 2002 policy invokes the idea of a “vision,” which is situated as a preamble to the document.⁹⁶ The document’s full vision statement, discussed in part above, follows:

In the rapidly changing world of today’s knowledge society, with the progressive use of newer and innovative technological means of communication, literacy requirements continue to expand regularly. In order to survive in today’s globalized world, it has become necessary for all people to learn new literacies and develop the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information in multiple manners. As recalled in paragraph 8 of the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade, “Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires a renewed vision of literacy.”

The vision for the Literacy Decade situates Literacy for All at the heart of Education for All. Literacy is central to all levels of education, especially basic education, through all delivery modes—formal, non-formal and informal. Literacy for All encompasses the educational needs of all human beings in all settings and contexts, in the North and the South, the urban and the rural, those

⁹⁶ The 1989 document does not invoke a “vision” or “mission.”

in school and those out-of-school, adults and children, boys and girls, and men and women.

Literacy for All has to address the literacy needs of the individual as well as the family, literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in society and in the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries. Literacy for All will be effectively achieved only when it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture, ensuring gender equity and equality, fulfilling learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people. Literacy must be related to various dimensions of personal and social life, as well as to development. Thus, literacy efforts must be related to a comprehensive package of economic, social and cultural policies cutting across multiple sectors. Literacy policies must also recognize the significance of the mother tongue in acquiring literacy and provide for literacy in multiple languages wherever necessary. (UNESCO 2002, p. 3, para. 7)

The references to different actors, spaces, scales, goals, sectors, and domains of life in this vision statement evidence an overall “revitalization of scale,” occurring under new capitalism. Jessop (2000) explains this revitalization as follows:

There is a marked degree of unstructured complexity as different scales of economic organization are consolidated structurally and/or are approached strategically as so many competing objects of economic management, governance or regulation. There is an increasingly convoluted mix of scale strategies as economic and political forces seek the most favourable conditions for insertion into a changing international order. . . . For, in addition to the changing significance of old places, spaces, scales and horizons, new places are emerging, new spaces are being created, new scales of organization are

being developed, and new horizons of action are being imagined. The resulting revitalization of scale (Collinge 1999) has created both the perceived necessity for various forms of supra-national economic coordination and/or regulation as well as the possibility of regional or local resurgence within national economic spaces. (pp. 343–344)

The “mix of scale strategies” typical of this revitalization is seen throughout the 2002 policy, and in particular in the vision statement. Individuals, communities, societies, nations, etc.—“all human beings in all contexts”—within a “globalized” world are part of UNESCO’s vision.⁹⁷ The interrelated processes of de-nationalization, de- and re-territorialization and de- and re-statization evident in the 2002 policy have important implications for the practice of literacy education. These processes are part of an overall “societal informalization” (see Fairclough, 2003) typical of post-World War II liberal societies in which “relations of power and authority become more implicit, and . . . interaction where such relations obtain become more informal” (Fairclough, p.

⁹⁷ Interestingly, as part of this mix of scale strategies, the term “level” appears 33 times in the 2002 policy (as compared to 13 in 1989). Examples of the use of “level” in the 2002 policy include:

UNESCO should take a coordinating role in stimulating and catalysing the activities at the international level within the framework of the Decade. (UNESCO, 2002, Introduction)

The vision for the Literacy Decade situates Literacy for All at the heart of Education for All. Literacy is central to all levels of education, especially basic education, through all delivery modes—formal, non-formal and informal. Literacy for All encompasses the educational needs of all human beings in all settings and contexts (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 6)

Placing literacy at the centre of all levels of national education systems and developmental efforts (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 10)

Building partnerships at all levels, particularly at the national level, between the Government, civil society, the private sector and local communities, as well as at the subregional, regional and international levels; (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 10)

Developing systematic monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels, supported by research findings and databases (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 10) see principal strategies section.

For the successful implementation of the Literacy Decade for Literacy for All, the aforementioned principal strategies must be put in place in reality at all levels through actions that are coordinated and complement each other. (UNESCO, 2002, p. 5, para. 11)

The range of organizational levels mentioned in the 2002 policy is wider and more inclusive than the that of the 1989 policy. The specific “levels” mentioned in the 1989 document are national, subnational, regional. In 2002, levels include international, national, regional, subregional, local, institutional, and programme.

224). This informalization, on one hand, provides the possibility for increased participation by actors who were previously explicitly excluded from the activities of governance under Atlantic Fordist hierarchies. On the other hand, however, the diffusion of responsibility in a “distributed system”⁹⁸ presents the “problem of what will make the units work in service of the whole” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 59). Jessop (2000) describes the problem from the perspective of international relations:

Political hierarchies are being reordered. The nested hierarchy of state power within territorially exclusive sovereign states and formal equality among such states was, of course, never fully realized . . . but it did provide the institutional architecture within which forces struggled for control of state power and attempted to modify the balance of power in international relations. . . . [This has] since contributed to a revitalization of scale and in increasingly convoluted, tangled and eccentric set of relations among different scales of political organization. The structural coherence of the Atlantic Fordist spatio-temporal fix has decomposed and there is marked degree of unstructured complexity as different scales of economic and political organization proliferate and different scale strategies are pursued. (p. 353)

The proliferation of different scale strategies presents the “the core dilemma of the new capitalism: how to ‘control’ empowered ‘partners’ in the absence of visible, overt top-down power” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 60). Under new capitalism, forms of “indirect control” emerge in “environments which themselves, in a sense, encode control” (Gee et al., p. 60) through the inculcation of particular values and visions. These implicit strategies of governance are perhaps less authoritarian, but they are also often more difficult to identify and thus resist. As such, in the pursuit of strategies of governance

⁹⁸ “We . . . refer to . . . non-authoritarian hierarchies as ‘distributed systems,’ because, in them, control is distributed throughout the system, and not centered in any ‘center’ that monopolizes power, knowledge, or control” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 51).

that operate without an “institutional architecture,” there are sure to be instances in which power differentials are exercised inequitably without being noticed. As relationships of power become more implicit, inequalities do not necessarily recede, they simply become less visible.

For this reason, the ideological model of literacy is especially important in context of the current new capitalist regime expansion. Because the model draws attention to the ways that ideologies and power relations configure practices of literacy and literacy education, it provides an analytic mechanism of vigilance in a world where patterns of dominance are more difficult to perceive. Unfortunately, as the discussion above indicates, the 2002 policy does not offer convincingly ideological accounts of literacy or literacy education. The proposed structure of governance for the Decade, with its diffuse system of accountability, enlists participation from various actors but simultaneously absolves them of their complicity in the distribution of social and material goods. Without an acknowledgement or exploration of this structural complicity, the ideological model cannot be said to operate.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have argued that two important shifts occur between 1989 and 2002 in UNESCO policies related to the U.N. Decade of Literacy. The first shift, in which the 2002 policy adopts language reminiscent of an ideological model of literacy, represents a significant move on the part of UNESCO to follow contemporary scholarly trends toward an understanding of literacy as situated social practice. This shift is most apparent on a lexical scale: the policy abandons the stigmatic term “illiterate,” replaces metaphors of war or disease, discards obvious language of functionalism, avoids mass terms such as “universal,” situates literacy in local contexts, adopts “ideological” (Street, 1993) terms such as “literacies/literacy practices” and emphasizes various identities and uses related to literacy. These elements of the 2002 policy, especially when compared with the clearly “autonomous” (Street, 1993) trends of the 1989 document, represent an important change in the way that UNESCO conceptualizes literacy. Given the organization’s historic preference for functional (therefore autonomous) theories of literacy (Jones, 1999), this shift should be considered a consequential move toward more progressive, “ideologically”-centered approaches to literacy education.

However, as this study has demonstrated, espousing linguistic requirements of the ideological model of literacy is a necessary but not sufficient step toward substantive discursive transformation. In the 2002 policy, the second shift that takes place, an intensification of the discourse of new capitalism, displaces the logic of the emerging ideological features in the text by using its terms to promote a global capitalist agenda. In so doing, the discourse of new capitalism steers the policy’s irrealis away from the fundamental concerns of the ideological model—the diffusion of power and ideology through literacy activities—toward instrumental concerns associated with economic and social life in a “globalized world.” Evidence of the

operation of new capitalist discourse is present throughout the 2002 policy and includes the introduction of new capitalist literacies, the “vision” of a “knowledge society/globalized world,” the diminishing relevance of the nation-state, the upward, downward, and outward shift of accountability to other “partners,” increased participation by the private sector, expansion of heterarchical governance strategies, and the “revitalization of scale” (Jessop, 2000). These discursive features rationalize the practice(s) of literacy and literacy education in the 2002 text, rendering them acquiescent to the demands of a new capitalism. Hence, though the policy attempts the rhetoric of an ideological understanding of literacy, in the end, this rhetoric is instrumental to the most pressing concern of the document: “surviv[ing] in today’s globalized world” (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4, para. 5).

Perhaps the most crucial findings of this analysis highlight the ways that features of the ideological model of literacy and features of new capitalism overlap so as to make the operation of the respective discourses difficult to distinguish. As discussed above, for example, both discourses privilege the local, both highlight a multiplicity of literacy practices, and both emphasize context. But each does so for different reasons. The ideological model privileges the local, in part, to concretize, understand, and enfranchise literacy practices that have been marginalized by traditional abstractions about language. New capitalism privileges the local as a site in which the global customization of consumption is cultivated—where the economic coding of identities takes place. The ideological model is concerned with the multiplicity of literacy practices because this multiplicity aids our understanding of literacy as ideologically-bound social practice(s). New capitalism is concerned with the multiplicity of literacy practices because the notion of multiplicity serves the ever-expanding (supposedly ideologically-neutral) forms of encoding and decoding needed for the perpetuation of the knowledge/information economy. The ideological model

focuses on contexts because from contexts emerge understandings of how power operates through literacy practices. New capitalism focuses on contexts because from contexts emerge opportunities for enterprise.

Clearly, the parallel features of the two discourses in the 2002 policy make it difficult to parse out the operating principles of each without careful, informed analysis. This “interdiscursive” play is not coincidental—the documented tendency of new capitalism to co-opt or colonize libratory discourses for its own purposes (Bates, 1998) is one of the ways it has reproduced itself so effectively in recent years. The resulting ambiguity around means and ends, evident in the 2002 plan, forces us to approach the policy and its implementation with a discriminating, skeptical eye. As contemporary scholarship reminds us, “Those of us who engage in sociocultural approaches to language and literacy are very much in the right place at the right time. But as our ideas become cooptable within the new capitalism, we must focus clearly on where we differ from new-capitalist expressions of these ideas” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 67).

Contributions of the Study

In the context of the discussion above, this dissertation makes an important theoretical contribution to the interrelated study of literacy and discourse. As the review of literature at the beginning of this dissertation argues, the emergence of the ideological model has been crucial to developing a more robust understanding of literacy on a conceptual scale. NLS scholars have generated bold theoretical models to advance the field of literacy, which has been otherwise entrenched in technical concerns for many years. Primarily, these models have focused on local uses and meanings of literacy derived from concrete, ethnographic accounts. Though these accounts have been crucial to the development of literacy as a concept, to this point, little work has been done to examine the “broader regulating discourses” (Maybin,

2000, p. 205) into which individuals and their communities are inserted through literacy activities. By moving beyond the study of “agents and their locales,” to examine “larger enterprises that play out away from the immediate scene,” (as called for in Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 1), this dissertation connects the ethnographically generated theories of literacy in NLS to the discursive production of meaning in institutional literacy work. This is particularly important to contemporary literacy theory in which critiques of NLS (Collins & Blot, 2003; Street 2003; Tusting et al., 2000) have called for more research that links the ideological model of literacy “to wider strands of social-critical work” (Collins & Blot, p. 4) including “Foucauldian notions of Discourse, Bakhtinian notions of intertextuality and work in critical discourse analysis” (Collins & Blot, p. 4). This study supports these links by demonstrating how macro-level, institutional ideologies are constructed to impart particular definitions of literacy and particular literacy practices that are “enacted” and “recognized” (Gee, 1999) at the local level.

From a methodological perspective, this study contributes generally to the growing body of discourse-based research in education studies and specifically to the strand of “textually oriented” (Fairclough, 2003) research emerging currently. As discussed in the methodology chapter above, this strand is particularly important because it focuses in detail on how taken-for-granted structures of language reproduce or resist specific representations of the world, providing discrete “social scientific categories” (Fairclough) or concrete linguistic data as evidence. Though research in education has begun to draw on the concept of discourse broadly, few studies effectively combine their discussions of representation with fine-grained linguistic analysis (Luke, 1995)—thus the critique that CDA often appears to be haphazard social commentary (Rogers, 2004). By analyzing how discourses are reproduced through specific lexical, grammatical, and semantic structures, this study contributes

to the development of models of critical discourse analysis that are systematic in their selection and presentation of specific evidence. The particular combination of Fairclough and Gee used in this study also draws on the two most well-developed conceptions of discourse in contemporary CDA studies, bringing into play on a general level Hallaydian and non-Hallaydian models of textual analysis (see Gee, 2004).

From a policy perspective, the study's major contribution is its detailed focus on the routine "naturalization" (Fairclough, 2003) of ideologies in policy texts. By examining these processes of naturalization, the study draws necessary attention to the practical implications of sub-textual policy decisions—the ways that problems and solutions get implicitly framed. In the case of literacy policy, this process of framing tends to persistently situate problems and solutions in economic contexts. As Blunt (2004) states, "the present tendency of policy discussions [is] to lean towards discourses that seek literacy education for Homo economicus, an actor whose salient criterion is an economic calculus, who is educated for productive roles in the commercial world and successful engagement in the labor market (Daly and Cobb, 1989)" (p. 16). Using critical discourse analysis to understand "how discourses operate and making their underlying ideologies explicit will help inform policy research and bring a broader range of research studies into the policy domain" (Blunt, p. 16). This additional research, of which this study is a small part, can help policymakers see alternative possibilities for framing problems and solutions in more comprehensive, ethically grounded discourses.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study makes a significant contribution by demonstrating an important certainty: new capitalism and other hegemonic representations of the world are only representations. Though these representations operate powerfully to enable and constrain action, as this dissertation illustrates, there

is always the possibility that other discourses can emerge with equal viability. “Seeing the new capitalism for what it is—namely a new Discourse in the making—allows us to juxtapose it with other, competing, overlapping, and mutually adjusting Discourses, such as a critical version of sociocultural literacy . . . , the various Discourses of school reform, and a variety of community-based and public-sphere Discourses” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 165). Understanding how discourses “work” (Gee, 2000) allows us to construct alternative representations of the world that advance different ends. “Discourses not only represent the world as it is (or rather is seen to be), they are also projective, imaginaries, representing possible worlds which are different from the actual world, and [are] tied in to projects to change the world in particular directions” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124). From a pedagogical perspective, literacy education, with its ideological dimensions, figures prominently in this endeavor.

Limitations and Future Directions

As is the case in all research projects, there are limitations to this study. As Gee (1999) states, “since discourse analysis, like all science, is a social enterprise we hope and trust the gaps in our own work will be filled by others” (p. 119). The first gap in this study relates to the textually-oriented approach to CDA I employed. As discussed in the methodology chapter above, this type of CDA pays particular attention to linguistic detail, explicating the implications of micro-level discursive trends. This approach allows the analyst to amass discrete pieces of linguistic evidence in support of arguments but, with its focus on detail, often forces the analyst to prioritize certain portions of the text at the expense of others. In the process of prioritization, I was not able to analyze all passages of text in the UNESCO policies with equal attention to detail. Nor was I able to trace all the potential discourses that

operate in the policies.⁹⁹ As mentioned above, I chose to focus on the ideological model of literacy because my research problem/questions center on understanding how models of literacy operate in the policy documents to advance certain agendas. The ideological model of literacy and the contrasting autonomous model provide categories that allow analysts to observe how operationalizing certain constructions of literacy can lead to certain material and social consequences. These agendas and their consequences have become an important analytic consideration of contemporary literacy scholarship (e.g., Street, 2003). I chose to focus on the discourse of “new capitalism” because, as Fairclough (2003) states, “a great deal of contemporary social research is concerned with the nature and consequences of [new capitalism]. . . . And, quite simply, because no contemporary social research can ignore these changes, they are having a pervasive effect on our lives. A more specific reason for focusing on new capitalism is that this is now developing into a significant area of research for critical discourse analysts” (p. 4). Perhaps more importantly, looking at the discourse of new capitalism and the ideological discourse on literacy simultaneously answers recent calls for research that connects contemporary social theory with a nuanced understanding of literacy (Collins & Blot, 2003; Street, 2003; Tusting et al., 2000).

Another limitation of this study is that it does not include an empirical account of policy implementation. Discourse analysis depends on the notion that the construction and inculcation of particular representations of the world matter—that they become “materialized” (Fairclough, 2003) so as to produce real consequences for individuals and societies. However, the analysis of discourse, in and of itself, does not provide a complete picture of what those consequences are—only of what they might

⁹⁹ In choosing to analyze these particular discourses, I had to forgo an analysis of other important discourses that very likely influence the UNESCO policy texts. Among these are discourses related to development (as discussed in the Context chapter above) and to the construction of gender. Future research might build on my analysis to examine how discourses on literacy and discourses related to capitalism intersect with representations of gender and representations of the processes and objects of development.

be. As Taylor (2004) states, “In the end, a CDA analysis is still another text, and just as one cannot know the effects of policy texts without empirical research, one cannot know what effects a particular CDA analysis will have without research. . . . So it is what we do with our analyses that may ‘make a difference’” (p. 447). Acknowledging this reality, this dissertation is intended to be an exploratory step in a more comprehensive analysis of the production and enactment of discourses. Although “discourses . . . circulate and are dialectically materialized, enacted and inculcated globally . . . globally circulating discourses are open to diverse local appropriations” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 164). Further research might examine local appropriations of the discourses analyzed in this study. Such a project could involve, for example, ethnographic analyses of UNESCO-supported literacy projects and/or discourse analyses of national and/or local documents related to the Decades of Literacy. The goal of this future research would be to connect the global analysis of discourse with the cultural processes and systems that develop through local interpretation.

The limits of a global-level analysis also have implications for practice and/or activism. From this perspective, this study acknowledges that although, “the language of policy is the operationalized discourse of contemporary political economy [and] for this reason, if for no other, a sustained critique of policy language is necessary” (Graham, 2001, p. 785), critique is “perhaps not sufficient, for positive change” (Graham, p. 785). As a critique, this study is only a small part of a larger movement “to use critical discourse analysis as an analytic and political strategy for talking back to public discourse, for disrupting its speech acts, breaking its narrative chains and questioning its constructions for power and agency” (Luke, 1997b, p. 365, as cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 446). Since “there is nothing inevitable about the dialectics of discourse,” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 208), discursive activism holds promise for social change opportunities in a variety of areas of social life—literacy education in

particular. An important requisite for this type of change is the involvement of discourse analysts in the dissemination of critique and in the construction of alternative discourses. As Taylor (2004) suggests, “Educational researchers may be policy activists themselves, or work with policy activists as ‘critical friends’. Alternatively, we may (and do) work as researchers with ‘insiders’ in the bureaucracy, or with teachers in schools, or with unionists and community activists in the public sphere” (p. 447). Fairclough (2001) similarly suggests:

We have to keep rethinking how we research, how and where we publish, and how we write. How we research: . . . the public sphere is cut off from struggles over the public sphere—why not work with activists in designing and carrying out research, tying it for instance to the campaigns of disabled people over welfare reform? How and where we publish: . . . why not seek to publish pamphlets, articles in newspapers or magazines, or on the web? How we write: [our] publications are written in academic ways—is it possible to develop ways of writing which are accessible to many people without being superficial? (as cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 447)

As discourse analysts become more directly involved in enacting alternatives generated by their critiques, new opportunities for change emerge: “Seeing a Discourse map of a society offers a chance to see the many paths running through time and space, a chance to see others who, at this time and place, share our ‘paths through life’ (Shuman 1992), a chance to elect to join the paths of others . . . and, a chance to forge new paths” (Gee et al., 1996, p. 167).

APPENDIX A

UNESCO Plan of Action for Decade of Literacy, 1990–2000



General Conference
Twenty-fifth Session, Paris 1989

25 C

25 C/71
15 September 1989
Original: English

Item 4.5 of the provisional agenda

PLAN OF ACTION TO ERADICATE ILLITERACY BY THE YEAR 2000

SUMMARY

This document is submitted pursuant to resolution 4.6 of the General Conference at its twenty-third session, which invites the Director-General, 'when the third Medium-Term Plan is being drawn up, to prepare a plan of action to help Member States in all regions of the world to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000'. The plan identifies four major objectives upon which Unesco's efforts should be focused: (1) alerting world public opinion; (2) rallying the international community; (3) strengthening the regional literacy projects and programmes; and (4) reinforcing technical co-operation with Member States. Two priorities are proposed: (1) to improve the education of women and girls; and (2) to deal with countries confronting especially severe problems of illiteracy. In the final chapter, reinforcement of staffing and budget is proposed to strengthen Unesco's capacity to assist its Member States during the period covered by the Plan of Action, 1990-1999.

Point for decision: paragraph 47.

26 SEP. 1989

INTRODUCTION

1. To promote the creation of a literate world by the end of the century? That is the issue which this document addresses. It is a fundamental concern which has been considered by the General Conference and the Executive Board on several previous occasions¹. The conclusions drawn from each of these examinations have been broadly similar regarding both what Unesco can do and what it cannot do. A conclusion common to all studies is that Unesco cannot directly combat illiteracy. This is the responsibility of Member States, as the General Conference has recognized on numerous occasions². It is they who must take the necessary decisions, make the plans, set priorities and targets, allocate resources and see that programmes are effectively implemented. As the in-depth study conducted by the Special Committee of the Executive Board on the basis of the Report of the Director-General on the activities of the Organization in 1984-1985 - hereafter referred to as the 'in-depth study' - notes, Unesco 'cannot by any means claim to overcome illiteracy single-handed' (para. 104), but must play its essential part by encouraging and facilitating action by governments and other partners. Thus, the Plan of Action is essentially a plan for encouraging, facilitating and assisting action by Member States.

2. What then differentiates the Plan of Action from Unesco's previous efforts, over more than 40 years, in the struggle against illiteracy? Essentially, the difference resides in the reinforced commitment to literacy both within Unesco and in the world-at-large upon which the plan of action must build and to which it must contribute. At its 129th session, the Executive Board decided that 'Absolute priority should be given to the struggle against illiteracy' by the Organization during the period covered by the third Medium-Term Plan, 1990-1995. This unambiguous commitment coincides with a growing awareness in all parts of the world that education is the key to the future and literacy the most essential of educational skills. Hence, literacy is an idea around which world public opinion can be mobilized, alliances with other organizations and agencies forged and enhanced co-operation with Member States pursued. Another fundamental difference is that Unesco's future action can build upon a foundation constructed through more than a decade of productive effort: the regional literacy projects and programmes which now cover all the major developing areas. Hence, the climate

1. See, for example, document 20 C/71: 'The Organization's literacy programme: conclusions and recommendations of the Director-General to the Executive Board and to the General Conference on ways and means of implementing 19 C/Resolution 1.192', Paris, 1978; the in-depth study conducted by the Special Committee of the Executive Board on the basis of the Report by the Director-General on the activities of the Organization in 1984-1985, 'Unesco's literacy work: achievements, strategies and future action', rapporteurs: Mr Iba Der Thiam (Senegal) and Mr Andri Isaksson (Iceland), Paris, 1987; and document 24 C/78: 'Report of the Director-General on the preparation of the Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000', Paris, 1987.
2. Resolution 1/6.1/2 of the General Conference at its twentieth session (Paris, 1978), which was adopted following a review of the Organization's Literacy Programme presented to the General Conference in document 20 C/71, states that 'The struggle against illiteracy is a task which primarily involves the national responsibility; if it is to be successful, there must be a firm political will exercised with perseverance at the highest level, and all the national resources available must be mobilized'.

for action is propitious and the regional projects and programmes provide a framework within which co-operation with and among Member States can be pursued at the regional level.

3. The present document is not a 'blueprint' for building a literate world. Unesco does not possess the means to take on so daunting a task. If universal literacy is to be achieved, it can only be accomplished through an enormous collective enterprise involving governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, hundreds of thousands of communities and hundreds of millions of individuals around the world. The purpose of this document is to set forth the modest but significant contribution which Unesco can make to this vast and essential undertaking. The aims of the Plan of Action are:

- (i) to alert world public opinion to the scope and magnitude of illiteracy - in its different forms - and to the danger this poses to the harmonious development of society;
- (ii) to rally the international community to the cause of literacy in order to ensure a conducive environment for literacy work within Member States and international solidarity among them;
- (iii) to pursue, with increased resources and resolve, the regional projects and programmes for combating illiteracy, including the extension and strengthening of the network based at the Unesco Institute for Education (Hamburg) for exchanging experiences in preventing and combating functional illiteracy in the industrialized countries; and
- (iv) to provide more effective technical co-operation to Member States, including in particular an enhanced flow of documents and information on national experiences and a reinforcement of training activities for national specialists.

4. In pursuing these objectives, priority will be accorded to education for women and girls and to supporting the efforts of Member States which have either very large numbers of illiterates in their population or extremely high rates of illiteracy. If the Plan of Action is to be more than pious hopes, it will be essential to considerably strengthen Unesco's staff resources for literacy activities and to progressively increase the budget allocated to such activities. It will also be necessary to periodically and critically review the progress of the Plan of Action and to update and revise it, as required.

CHAPTER I: ANTECEDENTS

5. This document is presented pursuant to resolution 4.6 (Annex I) of the General Conference at its twenty-third session (Sofia, 1985), which recognized illiteracy as a matter of special urgency which should be a priority objective of the international community and Unesco and invited the Director-General, 'when the third Medium-Term Plan is being drawn up, to prepare a plan of action to help Member States in all regions of the world to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000'.¹

- 1. It will be recalled that resolution 2.2 of the General Conference at its twenty-third session, on International Literacy Year, invites the Director-General 'in the preparation of the third Medium-Term Plan, to accord special attention to the formulation of a comprehensive strategy for the eradication of illiteracy as an essential element of the Plan'. This document, therefore, responds to resolution 2.2, as well as to resolution 4.6, in providing an overview of the comprehensive strategy for literacy which is incorporated in the third Medium-Term Plan.

6. At its 125th session, by decision 5.1.1, the Executive Board stressed 'the need, in the context of this Plan of Action, to concentrate the available resources on a limited number of urgent problems in respect of which tangible results can be obtained within a reasonable period of time'. As indicated above,¹ two key-problem areas are proposed for special attention: the education of women and girls and Member States facing particularly severe illiteracy problems.

Priority to the education of women and girls

7. The justifications for selecting the education of women and girls as a special area of attention are numerous and persuasive. In many developing nations, illiteracy of women and low school attendance of girls are the heart of the problem. Of the estimated 889 million adult illiterates (1985 estimates), 561 million are women. The differential in illiterate rates between women and men in developing countries is 21 percentage points: just over a quarter of the men, but nearly half the women are illiterate. This disparity is caused by cultural, social and economic factors which have resulted in inadequate provision of educational opportunities to women and girls. The consequences of this neglect are multiple and serious. Women bear the main responsibility for the well-being of their family and play the major role in efforts to improve health and nutritional standards and to introduce family planning practices. They are also the principal educators of coming generations. In the poorest strata of society, whether rural or urban, women perform economic functions which are essential to society and crucial for their family's survival. Education of girls and women is, thus, a priority whether one's criterion is economic development or greater equity. Women are a major productive as well as the only reproductive force of society and, at the same time, are often the poorest of the poor. This is a deeply rooted problem which will not be rapidly solved, but experience shows that properly designed programmes which address the urgent needs of women can produce significant short-term results while providing a basis for longer term progress.

Priority to the LDCs

8. The purpose which the General Conference has established for the Plan of Action is to help Member States in their struggle against illiteracy. If priorities must be set, the greatest support should, *ceteris paribus*, go to the States having the greatest need. If this is measured in terms of absolute numbers of illiterates, there are nine States which each have more than ten million illiterates in their population and which, collectively, account for over three quarters of the world's illiterates. It is evident that there can be no significant progress in the struggle against illiteracy without progress in these countries. Hence, it is understandable that such States should be accorded priority. The views expressed in a collective consultation with seven of the States in this category (Pattaya, November 1988) were, however, that the most helpful actions which Unesco could take on their behalf are global and regional, not country-specific: namely, keeping literacy high on the agenda of urgent international problems and pursuing the development of the regional programmes. If need is measured in terms of illiteracy rates, rather than absolute numbers of illiterates, the least developed countries or LDCs stand out. In 26 of the 35 LDCs for which data are available, the majority of the adult population is illiterate. In five countries, more than 90 per cent of the adult women are illiterate. Collectively, the LDCs account for an estimated 179 million adult illiterates. It is, moreover, alarming to note that in certain of these countries, the key indicator of the future literacy rate - the primary-school enrolment ratio - has declined. The LDCs

1. The selection of priorities is discussed in greater detail in paragraphs 54-57 of document 24 C/78 already cited.

face a double challenge: how to confront a serious educational crisis and do so with limited and, in certain cases, diminishing resources. The majority of LDCs are in Africa, the region in which the United Nations and Unesco have launched special programmes to meet emergency needs and foster long-term development. Hence, it is proposed, in implementing the Plan of Action, to accord special priority to the needs of LDCs having high rates of illiteracy. At the same time, the situation in those countries having large numbers of illiterates will be monitored and, on request from national authorities, co-operation provided on a priority basis, when required. Experience suggests that such requests are normally for very specific purposes: for example, arranging study visits to literacy projects in other countries which are considered to be of special interest.

Promote literacy or eradicate illiteracy?

9. At its 126th session, by decision 5.1.3, the Executive Board invited the Director-General, when preparing the Plan of Action, to take account of the conclusions and proposals of the in-depth study. Among the issues raised in this study (para. 112) is whether or not it is wise to aim at a goal which is widely recognized to be unachievable: the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000. This same issue has also been discussed and debated in numerous settings, including the General Conference and Executive Board. The Experimental World Literacy Programme, which Unesco conducted in co-operation with other agencies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, provides a cautionary lesson concerning the proclamation of overly ambitious objectives. While the results of this programme were generally positive and have had a lasting impact on literacy work in a number of countries, the success of the programme was not measured by its achievements, but against the euphoric claims and rhetoric of the early years. By these unrealistic standards, it was considered a failure and was widely reported to be such in the media. Both Unesco and the cause of literacy suffered as a consequence. The Director-General considers that it may be wise to put an end to such debate by adopting a title upon which all can agree. He proposes 'The Unesco Plan of Action for Literacy, 1990-2000'. In addition to being more realistic, such a title more accurately corresponds to the nature of the educational process which involves fostering, nurturing and instilling far more than eradicating or eliminating.

10. In accordance with the terms of resolution 4.6, the Director-General submitted a progress report on the preparation of the Plan of Action (24 C/78) to the General Conference at its twenty-fourth session (Paris, 1987). The considerations and strategy of action set forth in this document inspired the drafting of Programme I.1 of the Draft Medium-Term Plan (1990-1995). Towards basic education for all, and an emphasis upon components capable of supporting literacy action in other major programme areas. The discussion of the nature of the problem of illiteracy set forth in paragraphs 4-8 of document 24 C/78 is, for brevity, not repeated here. Suffice it to note that illiteracy is often deeply rooted in prevailing social, cultural and economic conditions and closely related to poverty, disadvantage and exclusion. Hence the struggle for literacy is, at the same time, a struggle for development, justice, greater equality, respect of cultures and recognition of the human dignity of all and the claims of each to an economic, social and political stake in society and the fruits which derive therefrom. It is that which makes this struggle so difficult; it is also that which makes it so essential and worth while.

CHAPTER II: ALERTING WORLD PUBLIC OPINION

11. Numerous studies and analyses of the role which Unesco can play in the struggle against illiteracy have, with near unanimity, stressed the Organization's responsibility to make better known to world public opinion the

developing nations, without increased financial and material support. Indeed, in certain countries ill-conceived 'adjustment programmes' have had a destructive impact on education. In these countries, there is an urgent need to undo the damage before progress will be possible.

World Conference on Education for All

19. Under these circumstances, it was logical and necessary for the Director-General of Unesco to take the lead in forging an alliance of major agencies to promote education for all. The World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs has this as its prime objective. It has four sponsors: UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and Unesco. Other United Nations agencies as well as bilateral donors and foundations have agreed to join hands in this undertaking. Education is the responsibility of Unesco within the United Nations system, but education is also the essential ingredient which makes the difference between success and failure in the programmes of many other agencies.

20. For Unesco, the World Conference and its follow-up are key elements in the plan for mobilizing international agencies, and more particularly the United Nations family, in support of literacy. The World Conference will provide a forum in which Specialized Agencies and multilateral and bilateral funding sources can work out modalities of co-operation among themselves and with interested Member States as a means for providing more effective and sustained support to national educational efforts. It can, as well, be expected to establish programmes of joint co-operation for implementing the objectives of the World Conference which closely correspond to those of the Unesco Plan of Action. Universal literacy will be ultimately achieved if education for all is progressively ensured.

21. The strength of the alliance sponsoring the World Conference is precisely in the diversity of its partner organizations and agencies. Unesco, as the Specialized Agency competent in the field of education, has a special responsibility to provide intellectual leadership. Unesco's particular concern is an ethical imperative: ensuring the right to education. For Unesco, education is, first and foremost, a fundamental right and an essential condition for the well-being of humanity. The raison d'être of the alliance is the shared conviction that education will be the major force in shaping the world of tomorrow. Each partner brings to the alliance its own unique set of objectives, resources and modes of action. Unesco's responsibility and vocation is to work closely with its Member States to ensure that these diverse contributions serve the harmonious development of the education system as a whole and promote the right to education for all.

22. Both within and outside the framework of the World Conference and its follow-up, Unesco will pursue its co-operation with international agencies and bilateral donors to mobilize resources for the promotion of literacy, particularly in the LDCs and other countries facing severe financial constraints. The World Conference can, however, be expected to give a boost to these efforts by directly involving major multilateral and bilateral donors in a serious examination of educational issues as well as by focusing public and media attention on the actions needed to promote literacy. In particular, the Conference will give special attention to the priority areas identified here: education for women and girls and the plight of the LDCs.

International Conference on Education

23. The forty-second session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) is scheduled to take place in Geneva in September 1990 with literacy as its theme. Whereas the purpose of the World Conference is essentially to mobilize political commitment at the highest level and forge a new partnership

in support of education for all, the ICE will be devoted to working with Ministers of Education on the technical issues of implementing policies which can make education for all a reality. In this sense, the ICE will be both a follow-up of and a complement to the World Conference. This Conference will also review the achievements of International Literacy Year and suggest follow-up measures.

Mobilization of NGOs

24. One of the first and most fruitful consequences of the Proclamation of 1990 as International Literacy Year has been the mobilization of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that this has inspired. As described in document 25 C/72, 'Report by the Director-General on International Literacy Year, 1990', an International Task Force on Literacy has been created. This Task Force is a coalition of some 30 NGOs concerned with literacy or related issues which have banded together to work on activities for the Year. The Standing Committee on NGOs has invited the Unesco Secretariat to co-operate with the Task Force. Many of the organizations involved in the Task Force have national branches with thousands and, in certain cases, millions of members. Hence, the mobilization of NGOs for literacy, which is one of the main aims of the Task Force, has extended down to the grass roots. The activities of the Task Force complement those of Unesco's annual Collective Consultation of NGOs on Literacy. Indeed, many members of the Task Force are among the organizations which founded the Collective Consultation. The aim in both cases is to mobilize NGOs for literacy and facilitate inter-NGO co-operation. Non-governmental organizations - especially those working at the community level - have a unique capacity to design, test and implement innovative programmes. In the decade ahead, it is planned that Unesco will reinforce its co-operation with NGOs in support of literacy: working not only with NGOs engaged in education, including those representing the teaching profession, but also with NGOs concerned with communication, culture, youth, and those representing the disadvantaged.

25. Rallying the international community implies forging a grand alliance of various and diverse organizations sharing a common commitment to the creation of a literate world. Each organization defines its own role and contributes according to its own means and modalities. In promoting such partnerships, Unesco is recognizing that illiteracy is not only an educational problem, but also a societal problem which must be confronted by action in many fields. The Organization's strategy and responsibility is to widen the circle of participants in the struggle against illiteracy in order to intensify action and accelerate progress. The alliances created for International Literacy Year and around the World Conference will provide a framework for co-operation throughout the period covered by the Plan of Action.

CHAPTER IV: STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES FOR LITERACY

26. The essential building blocks of the Unesco Plan of Action are the regional projects and programmes for literacy: the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa, the Asian and Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL), and the Regional Programme for the Universalization and Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy in the Arab States by the Year 2000. The table on the following page traces the major steps in the establishment of these regional projects and programmes which are now in place in all the major developing regions of the world. An information-exchange network based at the Unesco Institute for Education (Hamburg) provides a mechanism for facilitating co-operation among industrialized countries confronting problems of functional illiteracy. Hence,

an institutional basis for carrying out the Plan of Action exists in all regions of the world.

27. The regional literacy programmes are examples of unity in diversity. All are based on two fundamental principles: technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDCs) and the need to combat illiteracy through a global approach combining the universalization and renewal of primary education with stepped-up literacy work among out-of-school youth and adults. All programmes give special attention to the education of women and girls and to post-literacy activities. But each programme is unique, adapted to the special needs and circumstances of the region it serves. They differ in the specifics of the objectives they pursue, in their modalities of operation and in the manner in which they are guided or governed. Three programmes, for example, are guided by advisory committees, whereas the fourth, the Major Project in Latin America and the Caribbean, is governed by an intergovernmental committee. The two programmes which have been established longest have set up networks of specialized national institutions in different programme areas; the more recently established programmes are studying similar action. But the ultimate goal of all programmes is the same: education for all.

Establishment of the Regional Projects and Programmes for Literacy

1979-1989

- | | |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1979 | Mexico Declaration (Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning of Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean) recommends regional action for literacy |
| 1981 | Launching of the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean |
| 1982 | Harare Declaration (Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States) recommends a regional literacy programme for Africa |
| 1984 | Launching of the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa |
| 1985 | Recommendation No. 10 of the Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning of Member States in Asia and the Pacific proposes the setting up of a regional literacy programme |
| 1986 | Workshop of specialists in Europe on Prevention of Functional Illiteracy and Integration of Youth into the World of Work recommends establishment of network on functional illiteracy for industrialized countries |
| 1987 | Establishment, in conjunction with the Unesco Institute for Education in Hamburg, of a network for exchange of information and documentation on functional illiteracy among interested industrialized countries |
| 1987 | Launching of the Regional Programme for Universal Provision and Renewal of Primary Education and Eradication of Illiteracy in Asia and the Pacific (APPEAL) |
| 1987 | Meeting of Senior Officials in the Ministries of Education in the Arab States recommends establishment of an Arab Regional Co-operation Programme for the Arab States |

1989 Launching of the Regional Programme for the Universalization and
 Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy in
 the Arab States by the Year 2000.

Successes and difficulties

28. The achievements of the regional programmes have amply demonstrated their value and validity and justify the strong attachment of the Member States of the respective regions to them. The major difficulty affecting these programmes and limiting their impact concerns the economic constraints confronted in the developing regions of the world. Progress towards regional goals is evidently the consequence of the success of national efforts. But, in many countries, these efforts are faltering because of the economic crisis which has severely restricted the development of educational programmes. Thus, while a viable mechanism for international co-operation exists, the resources needed to give vitality to the regional programmes are in critically short supply. In suggesting issues affecting the regional programme to be dealt with by the forthcoming sixth Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Development in African Member States (MINEDAF VI), the second session of the Consultative Committee (Dakar, 17-20 April 1989) of the Regional Programme gave first place to the 'financing of education in general and literacy in particular'. The third Meeting of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee for the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Guatemala City, 25-30 June 1989) was even more explicit regarding the impact of the economic crisis on education in the region: '... the grave socio-economic circumstances affecting the region, outstanding features of which are the foreign debt, an unequal system of trade and the countries' general impoverishment, ... may cause the objectives and goals of the Major Project up to the year 2000 to be irreversibly jeopardized...'. Inevitably, the regional programmes are affected by the economic crisis of education in the developing nations. They are redoubling their efforts to achieve progress in the face of this crisis, but it is an uphill struggle.

Solidarity and support

29. With the urgent needs of the regional programmes in mind and the benefits to education in the region which would result from their strengthening, the Director-General wrote, in June 1989, to the Executive Heads of UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank in identical terms: 'Unesco's regional programmes and networks represent, in my view, one of the United Nations system's most serious attempts yet to realize the ideal of South-South co-operation, to which so many of our developing-country Member States attach such great importance ... [Our future] collaboration could extend also to giving an impulse to the ongoing regional programmes and networks.'. Unesco's aim is to reinforce and strengthen the regional programmes in order to increase their capacity to serve their respective regions.

30. In brief, the regional programmes represent indispensable mechanisms for regional co-operation to promote literacy. But the success of these programmes is conditioned by the crisis of education in many developing Member States. Hence, the first requirement for revitalizing the regional programmes is to enhance financial and material support to education in Member States facing serious economic problems. A second requirement is for increased direct support for the regional programmes themselves in order to increase their effectiveness and extend their scope and reach. Unesco has increased its participation in the regional programmes by conducting most regular programme activities concerned with literacy through or within the framework of the various regional programmes. The goal of the Plan of Action will be to increase support for the regional programmes from both the regular budget and from extra-budgetary sources.

CHAPTER V: REINFORCED TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION WITH MEMBER STATES

31. The promotion of literacy, in the broad sense in which Unesco employs that term, calls for action in numerous and diverse fields covering formal as well as non-formal education, initial instruction as well as follow-up and extending beyond the Education Sector to activities carried out by the Sectors of Culture and Communication and Social and Human Sciences, as well as by various specialized offices and services, among them the Office of Public Information, the Office of Statistics and the Bureau for Co-ordination of Operational Activities. Reinforcing Unesco's contribution to literacy will imply systematically strengthening all of these activities during the coming decade. It is for this reason the Director-General has decided to increase funding for the Participation Programme and has called for contributions to the Special Account for World Literacy.

Education and the future

32. The heart of the literacy programme is Programme I.1: 'Towards basic education for all', which includes the two subprogrammes which constitute the global approach to combating illiteracy: 'Massive reduction of illiteracy', intended to support the efforts of Member States to educate out-of-school youth and adults, and 'Towards universal primary education'. Mobilizing Project 1 is also entirely concerned with literacy. In addition, many other elements in Major Programme Area I, 'Education and the future', provide essential support to literacy and will require appropriate strengthening. These include, *inter alia*, numerous aspects of the education of women and girls: the training of teachers, including a special emphasis upon women primary teachers; the development of curricula and methods, especially those appropriate for small rural schools and for education in urban slums; the teaching of basic scientific concepts, including those concerned with nutrition; the construction of low-cost schools and school furniture; different aspects of educational planning, including the development of policies and strategies for specific populations, groups and countries and the integrated planning of education; ways of financing and managing educational development, particularly through the fuller participation of local communities; and the relationship of literacy instruction to preparation for employment, in both the developing and industrialized countries. In all of these areas, particular attention will be accorded to the training of national specialists and to other approaches having a demonstrated multiplier effect. As Unesco's resources are extremely limited, the manner in which co-operation is conducted must be highly effective.

Other major programme areas and support services

33. Numerous activities which contribute to the promotion of literacy are included under a number of major programme areas other than education. These include Major Programme Area III, 'Culture: past, present and future', in which co-operation is foreseen within the framework of the World Decade for Cultural Development on the mutual enrichment of oral and written modes of expression; Major Programme Area IV, 'Communication in the service of humanity', particularly those activities related to rural press and the promotion of the book; Major Programme Area V, 'Man and society in a changing world', which provides for studies on development, the status and function of women, marginalization and exclusion as well as on illiteracy and functional illiteracy; Major Programme Area VI, 'Unesco's contribution to prospective studies and to strategies concerned with development', under which research and related activities will be conducted, *inter alia*, on the role of education in the development process, the impact of structural adjustment on education, and on the special needs and aspirations of women, youth and underprivileged groups. Certain of these activities provide direct support to Member States; others are intended to illuminate issues or test approaches, thereby building the Organization's capacity for future technical co-operation.

CHAPTER VI: RESOURCES, STRUCTURES AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

40. This document does not seek to set targets for the progress of Member States in the field of literacy. Indeed, most developing countries have themselves already established specific national objectives within the framework of the four regional literacy programmes. It may, of course, be necessary to revise or update these plans in the light of experience. There is, in many Member States, a need to carefully analyse recent developments and seek innovative ways of achieving established goals, to the maximum extent possible, under the constraining economic conditions which have emerged. Unesco has extended its technical co-operation in designing and implementing national literacy plans to the majority of developing nations. The Organization is prepared, within the limits of available resources, to respond to requests from Member States in this priority area. Yet, the greatest need and principal problem is not setting targets, but meeting them, especially under conditions of crisis and austerity. For some developing countries, particularly in Asia, it will be possible to achieve universalization of primary education and elimination of all but pockets of illiteracy, mostly among the elderly, by the end of the century. For other States, the urgent need is to expand primary education to the maximum extent possible, improve its quality and at least check the growth in the absolute number of adult illiterates. Even this may be beyond the reach of a number of countries, especially the LDCs, without extensive international support. It is the responsibility of each Member State to determine the progress it can realistically achieve and to set national targets in the light of this assessment. The duty of the international community, and of Unesco in particular, is to offer all possible encouragement and co-operation in the achievement of the established goals. The Director-General calls on the international community to recognize the extent of suffering and the impact on basic education and health services for the poor associated with the debt crisis and trade imbalances. He challenges the world community to reverse the trend set since 1983 which has seen a net transfer of resources from the developing countries to the developed world. He reiterates his call to examine seriously ways in which indebted countries can be assisted to prevent the collapse of their education systems, given that the development of their human resources is crucial to any recovery programme. As long ago as 1970, the members of the United Nations committed themselves to donating 0.7 per cent of the GNP of the developed world to the developing world - not out of charity but out of mutual necessity. This obligation was reiterated by the Brandt Commission. The Director-General requests those developed countries which have not yet met this target to increase their aid programmes.

Staff

41. The Plan of Action must, however, set priorities subject to the approval of the General Conference, according to which Unesco will allocate its limited resources. The Director-General sees that the first and most urgent requirement is for an immediate and sizeable increase in the number of staff devoted to literacy activities, both at Headquarters and in the field offices. The Director-General will keep the Executive Board advised of the measures he takes to this end and will include an account of his action in the report on the Plan of Action which it is proposed be submitted to the General Conference at its twenty-sixth session.

Budget

42. There will be a need for a considerable and continuing increase in programme funding throughout the decade. While it is difficult to foresee the future financial situation of the Organization, the Director-General proposes, subject to the directives of the Executive Board and the approval of the General Conference, to augment programme resources, measured in constant

dollars, for the activities in Programme I.1: 'Towards basic education for all', by a minimum of 10 per cent per biennium. This would represent an increase of approximately 50 per cent for the biennium 1998-1999, as compared to that for 1990-1991. This is not a dramatic increase, but it is a very sizeable one and will permit a continuing growth in support to Member States throughout the decade. Every effort will be exerted to ensure that at least a comparable increase occurs in the funding made available through Unesco from extra-budgetary sources. As noted above, funding for activities related to literacy in other education programmes, as well as in major programme areas outside of education, will be regularly reviewed and adjusted, as required, priority being given to activities which provide concrete support to Member States.

Structures

43. The most critical and essential structures for planning literacy are those at the national and subnational levels. Fortunately, these exist in nearly all developing countries, many having been set up to facilitate national participation in the regional programmes. Strengthening these structures, professionally and technically, will be one of the key aims of co-operation under the Plan of Action. In each region there is a body charged with responsibility for guiding or governing its respective regional literacy programme: the Intergovernmental Regional Committee for the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (PROMEDLAC), the Consultative Committee of the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa, the Consultative Committee of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All and the Co-ordinating and Advisory Committee of the Regional Programme for the Universalization and Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy in the Arab States by the Year 2000. At the world level, the Executive Board and the General Conference are closely concerned with progress in the area which has been designated as Unesco's absolute priority. Every meeting of the Executive Board considers some aspect of literacy. Indeed, normally a number of literacy related items are on the agenda at each session. The General Conference, of course, gives careful and in-depth consideration to the planning, implementation and results of the Organization's literacy activities. Thus, an institutional framework exists at the regional and world levels for monitoring the Plan of Action.

44. As concerns the Secretariat, the Director-General has established an Intersectoral Task Force for International Literacy Year and the Plan of Action which is convened by the Assistant Director-General for Education and includes, *inter alia*, representatives of the Culture and Communication Sector and of the Sector of Social and Human Sciences, the Director of the Office of Public Information and the Co-ordinator for Programmes on Women. In addition, working groups have been established in each principal regional office. These are normally chaired by the director of the office concerned and include specialists in primary education, adult literacy, education of women and girls and the regional information officer.

Review procedures

45. The Medium-Term Plan covers a period of six years, 1990-1995, whereas the Plan of Action extends to the year 2000. Both the Medium-Term Plan and the Plan of Action are conceptual rather than operational documents: they indicate principles of action, objectives and main thrusts of programme activities rather than the precise nature of the action to be undertaken and the budget to be devoted to them. This precision is provided in the draft programmes and budgets (the C/5 documents). Hence, each biennium provides an opportunity to update the Plan of Action through a revision of programme activities and budget. None the less, a systematic mid-term assessment is foreseen in paragraph 61 of the Draft Medium-Term Plan (1990-1995). This mid-term

assessment, it is proposed, will be carried out during the 1994-1995 biennium and its findings and results incorporated in the draft fourth Medium-Term Plan, which will cover the period extending to the end of the century.

CONCLUSION

46. The purpose of the Plan of Action is to identify the contributions which Unesco can make to the quest to achieve a literate world at the earliest possible moment and to indicate the resources acquired to enable the Organization to do so in an effective manner. Unesco's actions aim at creating a supportive environment for education, encouraging action within Member States and co-operation among them, and enhancing technical co-operation with and financial and material support to countries confronting the challenge of mass illiteracy. It must be realized, however, that these actions will be fruitful only to the extent that they set in motion a vigorous dynamic within Member States resolutely oriented towards the eradication of illiteracy in the shortest possible time and supported by a firm political determination and an energetic mobilization of resources and wills. The obligation of Unesco, and of the international community as a whole, is to encourage, facilitate and support action at the national level. The Plan of Action is intended to serve as a guide to that end.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

47. The General Conference may wish to consider adopting a resolution relating to the Plan of Action which might read as follows:

The General Conference,

Recalling resolution 4.6 adopted at its twenty-third session inviting the Director-General to prepare a Plan of Action for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000,

Considering that the struggle against illiteracy is an undertaking which primarily involves the national responsibility and depends for its success upon political will and popular sport,

Emphasizing, at the same time, the responsibility of the international community to provide encouragement, support and active solidarity to literacy efforts in Member States confronting problems of mass illiteracy with limited resources,

Noting with grave concern the adverse impact of the economic crisis afflicting the promotion of education and literacy in many developing countries,

Welcoming the energetic mobilization of non-governmental organizations in support of International Literacy Year and the valuable contribution they can make to the successful implementation of the Plan of Action,

Inviting the participation of all organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, funding agencies and foundations, in the promotion of literacy and considering that the World Conference on Education for All should prove an effective means for mobilizing such support,

Appreciating the growing contribution which the mass media - radio, television and especially the press - are making to literacy work in more and more countries,

Warmly endorsing the priority attention accorded to the education of women and girls and the plight of education in the least developed countries within the Plan of Action,

1. Invites Member States to redouble their efforts in the struggle to make education for all a reality and, to this end, to prepare or update, as required, national plans aimed at eliminating illiteracy at the earliest possible date;
2. Urges the international community to demonstrate, in tangible ways, its solidarity with the developing nations by aiding their educational efforts and by taking the necessary measures to relieve the economic crisis which is presently stifling education and development in many countries, thereby jeopardizing the future well-being of their citizens;
3. Approves the Plan of Action which shall be titled 'The Unesco Plan of Action for Literacy, 1990-2000', as a guide for planning the Organization's efforts in literacy during the plan period;
4. Invites the Director-General to report at its twenty-sixth session on the progress achieved and problems encountered in implementing the Plan of Action during the 1990-1991 biennium.

ANNEX

4.6 PLAN OF ACTION TO ERADICATE ILLITERACY BY THE YEAR 2000

The General Conference,

Recalling that one purpose of Major Programme IV is to facilitate the planning and implementation of action on a broad front to ensure general access to education in the Member States,

Recognizing once more 'that full exercise of the right to education is still far from having been achieved throughout the world, and that illiteracy remains one of the main social problems of our time and a major challenge to the international community',

Referring to the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, the fundamental purpose of which is to eradicate illiteracy before the year 2000, and to the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa,

Considering that the eradication of illiteracy in all regions of the world by the year 2000 is of special urgency for the full and effective implementation of the right to education and should therefore be recognized as a priority objective of the international community and of Unesco,

Noting further that Unesco's activities in this field have shown that this objective is attainable provided the necessary political will is aroused, a broad movement of solidarity created and all the necessary resources mustered,

Realizing that such a project calls for the establishment of a long-term Plan of Action,

Emphasizing the need to concentrate the programme of Unesco on the priorities in the Organization's medium-term plans,

1. Invites the Director-General, when the third Medium-Term Plan is being drawn up, to prepare a Plan of Action to help Member States in all regions of the world to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000;
2. Recommends Member States to collaborate actively with Unesco to this end, and to assist it in preparing the Plan of Action;
3. Requests the Director-General to submit to it at its next session a progress report on the preparation of the plan, and to include in the Programme and Budget for 1988-1989 special measures for the benefit of the Member States most in need of carrying out national literacy campaigns and programmes.

APPENDIX B

UNESCO Plan of Action for Decade of Literacy, 2003–2012

**General Assembly**Distr.: General
16 July 2002

Original: English

Fifty-seventh session

Item 100 of the provisional agenda*

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family**United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all;
International Plan of Action; implementation of General
Assembly resolution 56/116****Report of the Secretary-General*****Summary*

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/116 of 19 December 2001 entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all". The report presents the Plan of Action of the United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all, and consists of the recommendations to implement a successful decade.

In its resolution 56/116, the General Assembly proclaimed the United Nations Literacy Decade for the period 2003-2012 towards the goal of education for all. In that resolution, the Assembly took note of the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade (A/56/114 and Add.1-E/2001/93 and Add.1), which it had requested in resolution 54/122, and decided that UNESCO should take a coordinating role in stimulating and catalysing the activities at the international level within the framework of the Decade.

The draft Plan of Action has been developed in compliance with paragraph 11 of resolution 56/116, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, to seek comments and proposals from Governments and the relevant international organizations on the draft plan for the Decade in order to develop and finalize a well targeted and action-oriented plan of action to be submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

* A/57/150.

** The present report was submitted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 15 July 2002.



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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session adopted its resolution 56/116 entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all", in which it proclaimed the United Nations Literacy Decade for the period 2003-2012 towards the goal of Education for All. The proposal for a United Nations literacy decade was brought forward at the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly (see resolution 54/122), endorsed at the roundtable convened at the World Education Forum, held in Dakar in 2000, and reiterated by the Assembly at its special session, held in Geneva in 2000. The proclamation of the United Nations Literacy Decade by the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session was welcomed by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2002/23 of 22 April 2002 on the right to education.

2. In the preamble to its resolution 56/116 the General Assembly states it is convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and

adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century. The resolution also supports the concept of literacy for all in its reaffirmation that literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.

3. The United Nations Literacy Decade, as an integral component of Education for All, will provide both a platform and an impetus for achieving all six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action.¹

The six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action

- (1) Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- (2) Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- (3) Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
- (4) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- (5) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- (6) Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

¹ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000), annex II.

Literacy is the common thread that runs through the six goals. Indeed, the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all will ensure that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals and their communities.

4. The plan of action builds on the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade (A/56/114 and Add.1-E/2001/93 and Add.1) and articulates essential requirements and the focus of actions for the successful implementation of the Literacy Decade as a thrust of Education for All efforts. It aims to stimulate action taken by national Governments, local communities, individuals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities, public and private organizations and civil society in their broad coalition. It also aims to mobilize international agencies and national Governments for forging global commitments.

II. Literacy for All: the vision

5. In the rapidly changing world of today's knowledge society, with the progressive use of newer and innovative technological means of communication, literacy requirements continue to expand regularly. In order to survive in today's globalized world, it has become necessary for all people to learn new literacies and develop the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information in multiple manners. As recalled in paragraph 8 of the draft proposal and plan for a United Nations literacy decade, "Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires a **renewed vision of literacy** ...".

6. The vision for the Literacy Decade situates Literacy for All at the heart of Education for All. Literacy is central to all levels of education, especially basic education, through all delivery modes — formal, non-formal and informal. Literacy for All encompasses the educational needs of all human beings in all settings and contexts, in the North and the South, the urban and the rural, those in school and those out-of-school, adults and children, boys and girls, and men and women.

7. Literacy for All has to address the literacy needs of the individual as well as the family, literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in society and in the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries. Literacy for All will be effectively achieved only when it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture, ensuring gender equity and equality, fulfilling learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people. Literacy must be related to various dimensions of personal and social life, as well as to development. Thus, literacy efforts must be related to a comprehensive package of economic, social and cultural policies cutting across multiple sectors. Literacy policies must also recognize the significance of the mother tongue in acquiring literacy and provide for literacy in multiple languages wherever necessary.

III. Priority groups

8. Literacy for All focuses on a range of priority groups. In the countries of the South, particularly, women's literacy must be addressed urgently. The priority population groups to be addressed are:

- Non-literate youth and adults, especially women, who have not been able to acquire adequate skills to use literacy for their personal development and for improving their quality of life
- Out-of-school children and youth, especially girls, adolescent girls and young women
- Children in school without access to quality learning so that they do not add to the pool of adult non-literates.

Of the priority population referred to above, certain more disadvantaged groups urgently require special attention, in particular, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, aged people and pre-school children — especially those who have little or no access to early childhood care and education.

IV. Expected outcomes

9. National Governments, local authorities, international agencies and all stakeholders are to ensure that by the end of the Literacy Decade, the

Literacy for All thrust of Education for All will yield the following outcomes:

(a) Significant progress towards the 2015 Dakar goals 3, 4 and 5, in particular, a recognizable increase in the absolute numbers of those who are literate among:

- (i) Women — accompanied by a reduction in gender disparities;
- (ii) Excluded pockets in countries that are otherwise considered to have high literacy rates;
- (iii) Regions with the greatest needs, namely, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and E-9 countries;

(b) Attainment by all learners, including children in school, of a mastery level of learning in reading, writing, numeracy, critical thinking, positive citizenship values and other life skills;

(c) Dynamic literate environments, especially in schools and communities of the priority groups, so that literacy will be sustained and expanded beyond the Literacy Decade;

(d) Improved quality of life (poverty reduction, increased income, improved health, greater participation, citizenship awareness and gender sensitivity) among those who have participated in the various educational programmes under Education for All.

V. Principal strategies

10. In order to attain the above-mentioned outcomes, the implementation process of the Literacy Decade needs to be focused on the following actions as principal strategies, which are essential for attaining and maintaining the outcomes but are largely overlooked currently:

- (a) Placing literacy at the centre of all levels of national education systems and developmental efforts;
- (b) Adopting a two-pronged approach, giving equal importance to both formal and non-formal education modalities with synergy between the two;
- (c) Promoting an environment supportive of uses of literacy and a culture of reading in schools and communities;

(d) Ensuring community involvement in literacy programmes and their ownership by communities;

(e) Building partnerships at all levels, particularly at the national level, between the Government, civil society, the private sector and local communities, as well as at the subregional, regional and international levels;

(f) Developing systematic monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels, supported by research findings and databases.

VI. Key areas for action

11. For the successful implementation of the Literacy Decade for Literacy for All, the aforementioned principal strategies must be put in place in reality at all levels through actions that are coordinated and complement each other. The key areas for action are policy, programme modality, capacity-building, research, community participation and monitoring and evaluation. It must be stressed that all actions must address the gender equality perspective in all its ramifications.

A. Policy

12. Develop a policy environment across communities, sectors, agencies and ministries that mainstreams the promotion of literacy by undertaking the following:

- (a) Develop a policy framework and incentive scheme that ensures multi-ministerial collaboration as well as a financing scheme to enhance literacy programmes in formal, non-formal and informal education, spelling out expected roles of the private sector, civil society and individuals;
- (b) Engage communities (including community-based organizations, families and individuals), civil society organizations, universities and research institutes, mass media and the private sector in providing input into literacy policy;
- (c) Provide a framework for the context-sensitive development of a literate environment, such as:

- Promoting multilingual and multicultural education
- Encouraging local literature production
- Encouraging participation of the book publishing industry and establishing and supporting community libraries towards Reading for All
- Widening access to tools for expression and communication, such as newspapers, radio, television and information and communication technologies, as well as promoting freedom of expression;

(d) Ensure that literacy is part of broad discussions on poverty reduction, e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, multi-agency collaboration, such as the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as well as education, e.g. Education for All planning and the Sector-wide Approach;

(e) Ensure that the promotion of literacy is an integral part of planning and implementation for educational components relating to health, agriculture, rural and urban development, conflict and crisis prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, HIV/AIDS prevention, environment and other intersectoral issues;

(f) Put literacy on the agenda at national, subregional, regional and international forums on development and education, e.g. United Nations summits, G-8, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), conferences of ministers of education, regional partnership mechanisms such as New Partnerships for Development in Africa and national development consultations.

B. Programme modality

13. In order to achieve Literacy for All and thus Education for All goals, which cut across all age groups in and out of school, literacy programmes must cover the whole life cycle so as to make possible lifelong learning and be gender-sensitive, and must be delivered through both non-formal and formal approaches. They must also be built on the already available literacy programmes and, at the same time, should add newer literacy programmes by forecasting

the future literacy needs. It is therefore essential to recognize the need for the following actions:

(a) Develop programmes which aim at meaningful uses of literacy in addition to the acquisition of the basic literacy skills of reading, writing and numeracy, spanning various age groups from pre-school age to adulthood. Such programmes could encompass literacy readiness for pre-school children as well as family literacy and literacy for primary schoolchildren, school dropouts, out-of-school children and adolescents and non-literate youth and adults, addressing such content needs as:

- Literacy for vocational upgrading and employment
- Post-literacy and continuing education programmes for a variety of client groups, including information and communication technology literacy
- Information literacy, including media literacy, legal literacy and scientific literacy;

(b) Design programmes that give learner motivation a high priority by meeting the needs of learners and supporting a literate environment. The following actions are suggested to this end:

- Develop diverse modes of delivery, including the use of information and communication technologies
- Develop gender-sensitive content, materials and methodology, building on local languages, knowledge and culture
- Integrate literacy instruction in other sectors, such as health education, agricultural extension education and income-generation schemes
- Have reading materials available for children and adults in the mother tongue and a second language in schools and communities;

(c) Establish linkages and synergy between formal and non-formal education through the following:

- Develop equivalency programmes to bridge formal and non-formal education by establishing, inter alia, policies, guidelines and accreditation mechanisms

E. Community participation

17. The success of the Literacy for All programme depends on the extent of the involvement of the local community in the programme and the willingness of the local community to take on the ownership of the programme. It is important that the Government should not seek community involvement as a cost-cutting strategy and it must be remembered that occasional campaigns and festivals do not ensure community participation in educational programmes. Some of the steps in securing community participation are the following:

- (a) Document experiences of governmental organizations, NGOs and the private sector regarding community participation in literacy programmes;
- (b) Provide technical and financial support for sustaining community-based programmes of literacy;
- (c) Create subnational/national networks of NGOs working with local communities for literacy;
- (d) Encourage local communities to organize community learning centres;
- (e) Share experiences of successful community learning centre programmes among countries;
- (f) Develop appropriate tools for communication between Governments and communities as well as among communities, including the use of information and communication technologies.

F. Monitoring and evaluation

18. For the success of the Literacy for All programme, it is necessary to build functional monitoring information systems across various programmes and different levels (institutional/subnational/national/international). The systems should be designed to provide reliable and meaningful information on the status of literacy among the population, on the uses and impact of literacy and on the performance and effectiveness of literacy programmes. The following actions are proposed for building an effective monitoring and evaluation system:

- (a) Refine literacy indicators and methodologies to enable countries systematically to

collect and disseminate more and better information, with particular attention to providing information on gender gaps;

- (b) Promote widespread and better use of population data, for example through demographic censuses and surveys, in monitoring literacy status, use and impact among the population;

- (c) Develop cost-effective methods for assessing literacy levels of individuals for use in literacy surveys, as well as in the regular evaluation of learning outcomes at the programme level;

- (d) Build information systems to support policies and management of non-formal education among agencies, programmes, learners and educators;

- (e) Establish long-term tracking systems of new literates for studying the impact of literacy on the quality of life.

VII. Implementation at the national level

19. The State must play the central and crucial role in planning, coordinating, implementing and financing programmes for Literacy for All. In order to fulfil this role, the State must build symbiotic partnerships with a variety of stakeholders. It is therefore necessary to mobilize the local communities, NGOs, teachers' associations and workers' unions, universities and research institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders to contribute to and participate in all stages of literacy programmes.

20. The successful implementation of the Literacy Decade requires that Literacy for All be the central focus of all Education for All plans and programmes. Thus, it is necessary to remember that a plan for the Literacy Decade and its implementation at the national level must be incorporated in the national Education for All plan and its implementation. Where the national Education for All plan has already been formulated, the Literacy for All component can be added as a supplement. Where the national Education for All plan is being finalized, it would be appropriate to incorporate the Literacy for All component within it. In the process of incorporating a Literacy for All component in the Education for All plans, a checklist of questions and key elements can be a useful guide. A sample checklist is contained in annex I.

21. The Literacy Decade must be viewed as a unity, not as a sum of 10 successive single years. Every country, therefore, must plan within its own 10-year perspective for implementing Literacy for All. In so doing, attention should be paid to ensuring that the initial period of the Decade is devoted to the creation of comprehensive and reliable databases on literacy. An example of such a 10-year time frame is contained in annex II.

VIII. Resource mobilization

22. The Literacy for All intervention must not suffer or languish on account of insufficient funding. Governments need to mobilize adequate resources in support of Literacy for All. The following strategies may be adopted at the national level:

- (a) Incorporate the Literacy for All component across the budget for all levels of education, from basic to higher education;
- (b) Attract additional funding through coordination and resource sharing with other ministries and departments where literacy is a component of programmes of advocacy, extension education and poverty reduction;
- (c) Mobilize the private sector and civil society to support the Literacy for All programme.

At the international level, successful resource mobilization will require:

- (a) Ongoing consultation among United Nations agencies in support of Literacy for All as a component of Education for All;
- (b) Involvement of bilateral agencies for their financial support and commitments;
- (c) Mobilization of international civil society in support of Literacy for All.

A special role should be given to the World Bank with the task of integrating the Decade in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and preparing a special funding chapter with Education for All. At the regional level, it is also possible to attract financial resources from regional organizations and regional banks. In order to attract international funding, it is essential to formulate credible projects based on research, justifying investment in literacy. These projects must also have

carefully worked out costs and effects based on actual studies.

IX. International support and coordination

23. The United Nations system as a whole sets the promotion of literacy in the context of human rights, seen as indivisible and interdependent. The right to education, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which literacy is both a crucial element and a tool, connects with the right to equality (especially gender equality), to development, to health and to freedom of expression. United Nations agencies as well as the World Bank engaged in these various sectors recognize these connections and frequently include literacy as one of the problems to be addressed and solved in conjunction with the fulfilment of other rights. As the coordinating agency at the international level for the achievement of the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All, as well as for the Literacy Decade, UNESCO will work within the Education for All coordination mechanism already established, through which it will identify literacy components in the ongoing development programmes of various international and bilateral agencies and forge joint mobilization and maximum use of resources among these agencies in support of the Decade.

24. In consultation with the relevant United Nations agencies, UNESCO will work towards creating meaningful and goal-oriented partnerships in order to encourage inclusive planning and implementation of the Literacy Decade. Such a partnership will ensure efficient delivery of different inputs provided by the United Nations agencies. A key partner will be the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the lead agency in the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. The World Bank will work with UNESCO in literacy assessment and cost and financing analysis for literacy, for which OECD and UNICEF can also be key partners. UNESCO will facilitate cooperation among other United Nations agencies whose mandates and programmes are strongly relevant to achieving Literacy for All, such as those listed below:

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: rural development, agricultural extension programmes

- International Labour Organization: learning and training for work, elimination of child labour
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: right to education, gender equality, right to development, right to freedom of expression, indigenous peoples (languages, cultures, knowledge)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS: education about HIV/AIDS
- United Nations Development Programme: rural development, participatory citizenship, democratic governance, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihood
- United Nations Population Fund: teacher training and curriculum development regarding reproductive health and population
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: education as a key issue in supporting refugee children
- World Food Programme: Food for Education
- World Health Organization: Health for All, primary healthcare education, access to health information, safe motherhood, HIV/AIDS prevention.

Annex I

Sample checklist for implementation at the national level

Key questions

- What is the current status of literacy in the country?
- What is the status of literacy programmes in schools?
- What literacy programmes are being implemented?
- What are the relationships between these programmes and other programmes for social and economic development?
- What are the problems/bottlenecks in running these programmes?
- How will Literacy for All be incorporated in the Education for All plans?
- Which priority groups need to be included in the literacy programmes during the Decade?
- What types of literacy should be included in the programmes of Literacy for All?
- What kind of data is needed for planning further input for these programmes?
- What proportion of the education budget should go to literacy programmes?
- Where and how can additional funding be obtained? (e.g. private sector, bilateral sources, regional and international bodies)
- What roles are to be played by whom in the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the programmes for Literacy for All?

Essential elements

- Policy and planning: plan for the Literacy Decade through incorporating a Literacy for All component in Education for All plans, with a realistic time frame for the entire 10-year period of the Literacy Decade
- Advocacy: draw up plans for advocacy actions at all levels in cooperation with all stakeholders, such as government functionaries, NGOs, civil society, institutions, funding agencies, local communities, local governments and potential learners
- Capacity-building: develop training programmes for all categories of stakeholders in the areas of planning, research, training, curriculum development, materials development, monitoring and evaluation
- Partnership: build effective partnerships with other ministries, NGOs, civil society, institutions, universities, the private sector, funding agencies, international agencies, United Nations agencies and the media
- Research: carry out baseline study for priority identification; support action research for developing alternative models and process research to review programme implementation

- **Monitoring and evaluation:** establish and activate realistic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; develop databases and keep track of current status of literacy
- **Celebration:** plan regular celebrations of the Literacy Decade on International Literacy Day in order to maintain momentum and commitment; plan regular media events as part of the celebrations
- **Resource support:** ensure adequate human and financial resources.

Annex II

Example of a 10-year time frame for the United Nations Literacy Decade

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
I. Policy: policy forums	National forums	National forums	National forums	National forums	National forums	National forums	National forums	National forums		
		Regional forums		Regional forums		Regional forums		Regional forums		
	Baseline research workshops									
II. Research	Database creation									
	Five-year research and experimentation programme in the use of ICTs for literacy learners									
III. Monitoring and evaluation	Indicator and assessment methodology development									
IV. Capacity building: regional training programme design workshops		Workshops		Workshops			Workshops			
V and VI. Community participation and two-pronged approach	National and subnational consultations	National and subnational consultations	National and subnational consultations		National and subnational consultations		National and subnational consultations		National and subnational consultations	
Information and exchange	Sustained strategic exchanges and sustained virtual forum									
International Literacy Day activities: possible themes	8 September 2003: Gender equality	8 September 2004: Diversity	8 September 2005: Creative literacy	8 September 2006: Teachers and facilitators	8 September 2007: Half-way celebration	8 September 2008: Quality	8 September 2009: Participation	8 September 2010: Literacy for health	8 September 2011: Materials and literature	8 September 2012: Celebration

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