



BALID

British Association for
Literacy in Development

Informal Literacy Discussion No. 10

Dave Baker will lead the discussion on

Numeracy - greater impact on people's lives than literacy?

on

Wednesday July 17th at 5.00 pm

At Feed the Minds, Lawn Lane, Vauxhall

Dave Baker is based at the London Institute of Education and the University of Sussex. In both institutions he is a Visiting Research Fellow in adult numeracy and post 16 mathematics. He is also the numeracy specialist on the LETTER projects in South Asia, Ethiopia and Uganda. Dave is passionately interested in the issue of social justice and mathematics. His aim is to transform dominant practices in mathematics education by developing teaching models and policies based on understanding maths as social practice. He has published and contributed to several books, presented at many conferences and published academic papers on mathematics education. Dave studied mathematics before becoming a teacher of mathematics. He taught on teacher education programmes in several countries and institutions and then researched the teaching and learning of mathematics and numeracy in teacher education, in schooling, in adult education and in non-formal education. He undertook research into relationships between young children's home and formal school mathematics practices and how understandings of these relationships may contribute to explanations of some children's low achievement in school mathematics. Recently he has worked with Uppingham Seminars on training teachers to use socially and culturally sensitive approaches to teaching numeracy in the UK, South Asia, Ethiopia and Uganda.

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Numeracy - greater impact on people's lives than literacy?

1 My starting point is the many years I have spent working with people steeped in literacy. Many of them seemed to feel that the work they were doing in literacy was the most important educational experience learners could have. Many would fight tooth and nail to ensure that their literacy courses had as much time as possible allocated to them. Some would either inadvertently or deliberately seek to label any work done in numeracy as literacy

2 In this discussion we will look at different ways of thinking about Numeracy such as: *Numeracy as a set of autonomous skills within education; Numeracy as social practices; Numeracy as written calculations; and Numeracy as a subset of literacy.*

3 By drawing on the work I have done in the UK, Tanzania and elsewhere I intend to question and problematise the dominant notion that Numeracy is value and culture free. Using my experience in working in South Asia, Ethiopia, Uganda, the UK and elsewhere, I will suggest that Numeracy as social practice is an alternative, broader, richer way of thinking about Numeracy. I will relate these ways of thinking to detailed work done with learners in the research projects I have been involved in such as the Leverhulme "Low attainments in mathematics" project, NRDC work, the Funds of Knowledge project and the LETTER projects. I am aware that BALID is taking a central role in LETTER projects.

4 Finally we will look at relationships between Numeracy and literacy and maybe we can suggest more constructive ways of thinking about this relationship so that learners can benefit positively from the overlaps and potentially rich interactions between them.

The discussion is free for members of BALID.

Non-members are asked to contribute £10 (£5 un-waged) to cover costs

We look forward to seeing you.

Travel: Vauxhall main line and underground. Feed the Minds in Lawn Lane is less than 5 minutes from the station