

STORIES OF LEARNING

**Social Science and Humanities
Research Council of Canada**



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Research Project Title: “Stories of learning”: Creative literacies and lifelong learning: Exploring learning sites and creative educational opportunities around reading and writing fiction

Overview:

This study investigated how “creative literacies” may provide innovative educational approaches across the lifespan and in various disciplines, related to learning and fiction writing.

Participants:

Life history/biographical interviews were conducted with 37 fiction authors to explore how they gained deeper insights into the writing process and learning connected to fiction.

Visits were made to “creative learning sites” such as educational programs and festivals connected to fiction writing. Interviews with 16 ‘key informants’ explored how they organize and deliver these events and programs to support learning linked to fiction writing.

Findings:

- Fiction helps to stimulate imagination and can be used to explore difficult and sensitive topics in various learning contexts
- In a global world, shaped by diversity and migration, learning about other cultural perspectives is increasingly important
- Using fictional resources for teaching means that learners can delve into challenging topics without feeling pressured to disclose personal aspects of their own lives
- Through fiction, learners are encouraged to view issues from the vantage points of others whose lives might be very different than their own

- Fiction authors can provide important insights into how creative learning processes occur and may be fostered through more imaginative teaching practices
- Various instructional activities can be developed in different disciplines that draw upon fiction writing to teach about assorted topics such as ethics or professionalism
- Events and programs that support fiction writing are an important resource to engage citizens in learning across the lifespan
- Innovative approaches can be developed to include participants coming from a range of different social and economic circumstances

Implications:

Fiction is a valuable resource that can be used by educators in a variety of disciplines to enhance learning across the lifespan. In order to have a literate society, with citizens engaged in more creative and innovative approaches to learning, it is important to provide support to fiction writers and events and programs connected to fiction writing.

Publications and Presentations:

- Gouthro, P.A. (2019 forthcoming). Educating professionals to think creatively and creatively: Using fiction to teach in professional studies. In Jarvis, C. & Gouthro, P.A. (Eds.). *Professional education with fiction media: Imagination for engagement and empathy in learning*. London, UK: Palgrave-MacMillan.
- Gouthro, P.A. & Holloway, S.M. (2018). Learning to be critically reflective: Exploring fiction writing and adult learning. *Studies in Continuing Education, 40*(2), 133-148.
- Gouthro, P., Holloway, S. & Jarvis, C. (2018). Triggering Transformative Learning: Using Fiction and the Narrative Arts to Creatively Explore Critical Social Issues in Adult Learning. *SCUTREA: Standing Conference of University Teachers and Educators of Adults*. University of Sheffield. Sheffield, UK.
- Gouthro, P.A. (2017). The promise of lifelong learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 36*(1-2), 45-59.

- Gouthro, P.A. (2017). Creativity, the arts, and transformative Learning. In Milana, M., Webb, S., Holford, J., Waller, R. & Jarvis, P. (Eds.) *International Handbook on Adult and Lifelong Education and Learning*. Palgrave MacMillan, UK.
- Gouthro, P.A. & Holloway, S.M. (2017). Troubling Perspectives: Learning About Insider/Outsider Viewpoints from Fiction. *SCUTREA: Standing Conference of University Teachers and Educators of Adults*. University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.
- Gouthro, P.A., Holloway, S.M. & Guy, J. (2017). Dialogical Learning and Conversations with Fiction. *CASAE: Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education*. Ryerson University, Toronto, ON.
- Gouthro, P.A. (2016). Imagination, Hope, and the Power of Story: Learning through Fiction. *ESREA: European Society for Research on the Education of Adults Network Conference on Life History and Biographical Research*. Christ Church University, Canterbury, UK.
- Gouthro, P.A. & Holloway, S.M. (2016). Fictional Spaces, Learning Places: Exploring Creative Learning Sites Connected to Fiction. *CASAE: Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education* University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.
- Gouthro, P.A. & Holloway, S.M. (2015) Feminism and Femininities: Learning About Gender and Women's Leadership Through Fiction. In Clover, D., Butterwick, S. & Collins, L. (Eds.). *Women, Adult Education and Leadership in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Gouthro, P.A. (2014) Women of mystery: learning pathways of female crime fiction writers. *Adult Education Quarterly*.64(4), 356-373.
- Gouthro, P.A. (2014) Who gets to be a writer? Exploring identity and learning issues in becoming a fiction writer. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 36(2), 173-187.
- Gouthro, P.A. (2014) Stories of learning across the lifespan: Life history and biographical research in adult education. *JACE: Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 20(1), 87-103.
- Gouthro, P.A. (2015). Using biographical research to explore what really matters to fiction authors: Intersections between fiction and biography. (pp. 143-149). In Formenti, L. & West, L. (Eds.) *Stories that make a difference: Exploring the collective, social and political potential of narratives in adult education research*. Pensa Multimedia: Milano, Italy.

For a more complete list of publications and presentations, as well as ongoing updates, please check out www.patriciagouthro.ca