

Centre for Lifelong Learning – Invitation, Research Seminar

**Literacy, learning and Identities**

Lyn Tett, Visiting Professor of Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde

*All Welcome*

**Venue: Conference Room 742  
Centre for Lifelong Learning**

**Level 7, Graham Hills Building, 40 George St  
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow**

**11<sup>th</sup> October 1.00-2.00pm**

Abstract

This presentation will argue that learning is not only about acquiring new skills and practices but is also about changes in people's identity. However, learning identities tend to act as self-fulfilling prophecies, and so play a critical role in determining whether the process of learning will end with what counts as success or with what is regarded as failure. This is because identity as a competent learner is shaped by the complex interaction of a number of factors that include past learning experiences and the mediating effect of family influences upon them as well as the norms and values of the social networks to which individuals belong. So identities feed into, and are fed by, learning experiences.

Through a study of adult literacy learners that participated in community and work-based projects, it shows that people are not passive but they are constrained by the socio-cultural structures within which they act. It demonstrates that negative experiences of schooling impact on learning identities but participating in programmes where students' abilities and achievements are recognised by both their peers and tutors is crucial in changing negative views of their competence as learners.

Lyn Tett is Professor Emeritus of Community Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Edinburgh and Professor of Community Education at the University of Huddersfield. She has written widely in the field of literacy and access to education.

RSVP: Janice MacWhirter, [janice.macwhirter@strath.ac.uk](mailto:janice.macwhirter@strath.ac.uk)  
Centre for Lifelong Learning, indicating whether you require lunch at 12.30

**All Welcome**