

# About the need for this archive of adult education documents

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There are three words I use to indicate why an archive is needed to fight the destruction of memory:

aphasia: a difficulty in remembering (and by extension, speaking) because of some head injury or infection – my analogy is the destruction of documentation or the suppression of its production during the apartheid era. In more recent times innumerable reports, evaluations, and key documents produced particularly by the state adult education system have never been published or released. Older documents also disappear from web sites.

amnesia: the often self service amnesia of whites as well as the ruling party's tendency to airbrush out the anti-apartheid resistance from non-ANC formations continues to be echoed in the lack of attention to alternative forms of adult education or critiques of the failures in state delivered adult education or even the silence when state initiatives succeeded but were not ascribed to the 'correct' bureaucrats.

aporia: originally a Greek term that denoted an impasse or state of puzzlement, inconsistency, doubt or indecision. When applied to a text it can be seen as a perplexing place in the text which undermines, inverts the meaning of, or deconstructs the rest of the (what at first seemed coherent and plausible) text. My analogy here is that it is precisely in collections such as this archive that these perplexing and "different story" documents can be found that cast a new light on our history and deconstruct the new myths appearing about our past.

History of education 'literacy, apart from obviously being based heavily on our normal literacy, requires us to develop the skills to overcome these difficulties: the brutal lack of historical texts, the self-serving erasing of memories about the past, and the difficulty of understanding the 'difficult readings' and getting access to them.