

Dr Paul Armstrong

Colleagues will be sorry to learn of the death, on 31 May 2020, of Dr Paul Armstrong, former Senior Lecturer in the School of Continuing Education. The following tribute has been contributed by Dr Rebecca O'Rourke and Professor Miriam Zukas.

Paul Armstrong joined the then School of Continuing Education in 2001 as a Lecturer in Continuing Education (Cultural Studies), and was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2006. He had previously held posts in adult education at the University of Hull and Birkbeck College, University of London, and in the further education sector.

During his time at Leeds, Paul was initially based at the Middlesbrough Adult Education Centre and contributed to the provision of a varied part-time accredited liberal adult education programme across Teesside and North Yorkshire. He also contributed to West Yorkshire-based programmes training educators in lifelong learning - the Certificate and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Lifelong Learning) and the Masters in Lifelong Learning. When restructuring exercises led first to the closure of the Middlesbrough Adult Education Centre (2003) and second to the School of Continuing Education (2005), Paul moved with the Institute of Lifelong Learning to the School of Education. He continued work with colleagues outside the Institute, teaching in the newly established Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Paul's work as a member of the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults [SCUTREA] spanned most of his career. In 1984, he was part of an influential exchange with adult educators in the USA and later promoted links with Canadian, European and Australian adult education and lifelong learning networks. He was SCUTREA's unofficial archivist, communications officer and photographer – and was elected Chair, Treasurer and Secretary at various times. In 1997 Paul compiled a CD-ROM containing all papers from SCUTREA conferences over a 25-year period; a heroic undertaking in a pre-digital world, and subsequently used by the British Education Index in its archive of 'grey' material, making the entire collection available online for the first time.

Paul's research contributions were characterised by innovation and contemporary relevance. He published the first systematic account of life history as a research methodology (Armstrong 1982), explored silence in pedagogy through a University Teaching Fellowship Award in 2007, tracked the representation of learning in popular culture and the comedic in pedagogy, and, in later contributions, reflected on transitions out of work at a time when the focus in the professional learning was on transitions into work (Armstrong 2009; 2012). This later work drew on his experience of a third restructure at the University of Leeds in 2009, where the closure of the Lifelong Learning Institute led to his early retirement, and is marked by his intellectual curiosity about the ways in which personal experience is situated in material and cultural contexts.

A generous and supportive colleague, Paul is widely and fondly remembered.

The funeral has taken place.

References

- Armstrong, P.F. (1982) *The use of the life history method in social and educational research*. Hull: Department of Adult Education
- Armstrong, P. (2009) 'Being displaced: pedagogical identities and early retirement: an autoethnographical account', in D. Clover (ed) (2009) *Proceedings of 28th Annual CASAE Conference*, Ottawa May 25-27, 15-20

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