

Research

by Jo deBeaudrap

■ I am a visual artist often incorporating symbols, collage and mixed media into paintings. For this piece I wanted to use, as raw material, the ideas and drawings recorded by people who took part in the research project. Since I don't work in the field myself this allowed me to connect with relevant issues, gather visual material and include real literacy workers in the project.

RiP participants expressed both frustration and gratification about their field. They wrote about the need for community support, for building a foundation and finding new ways to do things. Some expressed frustration at being surveyed when time and money are stretched thin. Several participants used a flower or tree to illustrate issues in their work. Although the plant/tree is not a particularly original metaphor, it is a theme I considered which was supported by associations made in drawings by participants.

Working on the piece I thought about how literacy affects the social and economic development of individuals. The impression that I have is that the challenges for the worker are often similar to the challenges of the learner: time, money, support and staying motivated.

We can look at research as the roots of literacy work, supporting growth and the real life of literacy, with people working and striving, whether in the field or in achieving literacy personally. The fruit of the plant is the literacy, symbolized by the alphabet buds; this fruit can be harvested and used in many ways. ■



JO deBEAUDRAP is a visual artist living in Whitehorse, Yukon. She produced this piece for the national framework project, *Focused on Practice*. To read the full description of her process on this work, go to www.literacyjournal.ca, click on Crazy Wisdom, choose Wild Cards, then Yukon.