



Adult Learning Within Reach

Member Lecture – 27 August 2020

Florence Nightingale's feminist essay 'Cassandra'
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Questions and answers not taken during lecture and answered post-lecture.

Q1 But did Florence see herself as Cassandra, who was right but no-one believed her?

I think the answer to this has to be yes. She did not make the connection explicit but educated people of the time would have known their classics and thus been likely to make that connection.

Q2 Was nursing as a profession acknowledged in other countries?

I know that various religious orders around the world were pioneers in training their sisters as nurses but beyond that I don't know. To date, my work hasn't led me in to the area of nursing in that context.

Q3 Were attitudes towards women teachers similar to those towards nurses? Were both regarded as professions?

Prior to Nightingale's elevation of nursing as a profession, women teachers and governesses would have been regarded more highly (I should stress that this isn't saying much, conditions could be terrible and pay appalling). However, most teachers and governesses had to be able to demonstrate a certain level of education whereas nurses (pre-Nightingale's reforms) did not.