ISSN 2054-5355

Volume No. 102 Spring 2021

RaPAL

Journal

The Research and Practice in Adult Literacies Network

Welcome

Research and Practice in Adult Literacies (RaPAL) is the only UK-wide organisation that focusses on the role of literacies in adult life. We promote effective and innovative practices in adult literacies teaching, learning and research; and support adult literacies practitioners and researchers. We enjoy engaging in debates that touch on English language and literacy, numeracy and digital skills across homes, communities and workplaces. Through our members, digital journals, conferences and fora, policy and advocacy work, we are active in Europe and have international links.

What we do

- Encourage collaborative and reflective research
- Publish a journal three times a year
- Create networks by organising events (including an annual conference) to contribute to national debate
- Believe in democratic practices in adult literacies
- Emphasise the importance of social context in literacies
- Critique current policy and practice where it is based on simplistic notions of literacy as skill
- Campaign for the rights of adults to have access to the full range of literacies in their lives

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We are a friendly group – open to new members and new ideas. Please contact us with any contributions (views, comments, reports and articles) and do not be put off if you are new to the field or if you have not written for a publication before. The journal is written by and for all learners, tutors/teachers and researchers who want to ask questions about this field of work. It does not matter if the questions have been asked before. We want to reflect the many voices within adult literacies work and to encourage debate.

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Note from the Journal Coordinator

Yvonne Spare *Yvonne can be contacted on journal@rapal.org.uk*

Welcome to Volume 102, the edition in which we bring you our final report of the RaPAL 100 Survey and look at some more of the ways in which teaching and learning changed during Covid-19 lockdown periods. Our editors for this edition were Gwyneth Allatt, Toni Lambe and Jo Dixon.

Our plans for this year include:

- *Volume 103 (Summer 2021)* ***Conference edition: 'Adult basic skills: building back better'*** *from L&W English, Maths, ESOL annual conference*

Submission of first drafts by end April 2021
Editing team: Tara Furlong and Mary-Rose Puttick.
Enquiries to journal@rapal.org.uk

- *Volume 104 (Winter 2021)* ***Qualifications***

Submission of first drafts by end September 2021
Editing team: Anne Reardon-James, Georgina Garbett and Sarah Freeman.
Enquiries to journal@rapal.org.uk

We are inviting submissions for articles for these forthcoming editions for 2021. We would particularly welcome longer academic articles suitable for peer-review and would ask you to contact us earlier than the deadlines above to allow discussion of your proposal. Any comments about this or other editions or ideas for future content can be sent to journal@rapal.org.uk. Don't worry if your ideas for an article do not fit one of our themes – there is space in all our Journals for items of interest to our readers. Don't forget that most Journal editions contain articles by new writers, including adult literacies learners. There are guidelines on our website on the Write for Us page and we offer as much support as you feel you need. We are also interested in hearing what you think about your Journal. There is a feedback section on the website so that you can comment on anything you have read in this or previous editions. Follow the link to our comments space at the bottom of the page, which needs the password that has been circulated with this edition. We look forward to hearing from you.
We hope you enjoy this edition of your RaPAL Journal.
We would like to reiterate that the articles we publish are not necessarily representative of the views or position of the membership body, and we do not advocate any given course of action in any given context. We do, of course, support freedom of speech and of academic liberty, and the pragmatic achievement of objectives as a negotiated consensus.

Editorial

Gwyneth Allatt and Toni Lambe

Gwyneth is a Senior Lecturer in Lifelong Learning at the University of Huddersfield. She worked as a college librarian before moving into teaching, first as an adult literacies practitioner and then as a teacher educator. She recently completed her doctoral research with a focus on adult literacies and the various ways in which the concept of literacy may be perceived and understood.

Toni is currently a doctoral scholar with University College Dublin's School of Social Policy, Social Work, and Social Justice. She has over twenty years' experience in the adult literacy field in Ireland in various capacities including, tutoring, training, management and organisation.

As the Covid-19 pandemic feature continues to shape our lives and work, this edition of the RaPAL journal includes contributions from researchers and practitioners who share their approaches to supporting both the learning and the wellbeing of the people with whom they have been working during these challenging times. A number of the articles focus on digital technologies and some of the writers have provided hyperlinks which will allow you to find out more about the some of the online tools and platforms they have used.

We begin, however, with a report on the RaPAL 100 Project which was launched in November 2019 with the aim of gaining an insight into adult literacies provision in the UK while creating a valuable resource for RaPAL members, practitioners, policy members and anyone with an interest in adult literacies. In their article, Toni Lambe, Jo Dixon and Gwyneth Allatt situate the project in the context of other literature and research in the field and explain the methodological approach used. They consider some of the key themes that emerged as the research data was analysed and from this, they draw some conclusions about the present situation in adult literacies education.

Turning the focus to technology, Kayte Haselgrove outlines the development of her own digital skills during the pandemic and the impact of this on her teaching. She explains how she worked with colleagues and learning technology experts to adapt her teaching to the online environment, along with some of the digital tools she learned to use.

Next, Becky Day reflects on the approaches she used to engage her students when the latest lockdown moved their English lessons online, sharing her unusual technique for persuading them to turn their cameras on too! Still on the theme of online learning, Kathie Orr introduces the digital teaching and learning resource designed during the Covid-19 pandemic to support adult learners to develop their skills with technology and

shares one learner's story about the positive impact it had on his ability to keep in touch with friends and family.

The focus moves to learners with English as an additional language in Mary-Rose Puttick and Femidah Norat-Gilchrist's article, in which they discuss their work on a pilot project aimed at addressing some of the health communication challenges faced by a group of female asylum seekers during the pandemic. They explain how an online course using WhatsApp and Zoom, and supported by volunteers, helped the women to develop their English and to form social networks.

Chlöe Hynes' contribution focuses on online Continuing Professional Development events. Using the metaphor of a recipe, she identifies some of the features that make engaging and successful online events and explains some of the digital tools and strategies she uses to promote collaboration and networking amongst participants.

On a contrasting theme, Claire Lapington extends her interest in everyday literacy practices to walking and the role that language and literacy play in the group health walks taking place in her local area. She describes how conversations and the stories shared were shaped by the landscapes through which the walkers moved and she identifies the beneficial effects of walking and talking in challenging times.

Finally, Kerry Scattergood reviews *Reflective Teaching in Further, Adult and Vocational Education* by Maggie Gregson and Sam Duncan, and Tara Furlong shares her news from the sector.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the journal and find the research and practice shared by our contributors a source of information and interest, and perhaps some inspiration too.

The editors wish to acknowledge the RaPAL 100 project team and the work they carried out: Gwyneth Allatt, Claire Collins, Amanda Derry, Jo Dixon, Sam Duncan, Sarah Freeman, Tara Furlong, Toni Lambe and Yvonne Spare.

We also thank Jo Dixon's daughter, Kesha Kannangara, for the front cover artwork on this edition.

The RaPAL 100 Project: a summary report

Gwyneth Allatt, Jo Dixon and Toni Lambe

Jo has twenty years' experience as a part-time teacher of adult literacy and ESOL and a track record of integrating and innovating with new technologies. She is currently studying for a PhD in web science (web science is the interdisciplinary study of 'how the Web is changing the World and the World is changing the Web' – see https://www.southampton.ac.uk/wsi/index.page).

Toni is currently a doctoral scholar with University College Dublin's School of Social Policy, Social Work, and Social Justice. She has over twenty years' experience in the adult literacy field in Ireland in various capacities including, tutoring, training, management and organisation.

Gwyneth is a Senior Lecturer in Lifelong Learning at the University of Huddersfield. She worked as a college librarian before moving into teaching, first as an adult literacies practitioner and then as a teacher educator. She recently completed her doctoral research with a focus on adult literacies and the various ways in which the concept of literacy may be perceived and understood.

All authors contributed equally to this work.

Introduction

The RaPAL 100 Project was an attempt to provide a snapshot or an illustrative 'patchwork' of the varieties of adult literacies provision available in 2019-20. We use the plural term 'literacies', because RaPAL, as an organisation, is driven by a social practices view of literacy/literacies that values not only the dominant, standard forms of literacy enshrined in curricula but also more marginalized and less visible literacies that may be specific to local populations and their living circumstances, family needs and social roles (Street, 1995).

We aimed to reach 100 providers of adult literacies education from across the United Kingdom and to use the information they provided to offer some insights into what was happening in the field at the time and provide a rare resource and community update to RaPAL's members, wider academic communities, adult and further education leaders and policy makers. The Project launch was planned to coincide with the centenary of the Ministry of Reconstruction's 'Final Report' on adult education published in 1919 that established the foundations for the UK's approach to adult education throughout the 20th century (Ministry of Reconstruction Adult Education Committee, 1919, cited in Centenary Commission on Adult Education, 2019) and publication of the first research outputs from the project would mark the 100th edition of the RaPAL journal. The project coincided with extraordinary times and due to the Covid-19 lockdown and wholesale movements of provision to online learning and

video conferencing, literacy entered a completely new stage in its history of dissemination.

In this article we provide an overview of the project, considering its broader context in terms of existing literature and previous research within the field of adult literacies provision in the UK. We explain the methodological approach used in the survey and we consider some of the key themes emerging from the data collected. Finally, we conclude that the insights gained suggest an evolving situation in which adult literacies providers, practitioners and learners find ways of responding to the challenges, and the opportunities, presented by policy, funding, technological developments and the Covid-19 crisis.

Literature Review

While the RaPAL 100 project looked to establish some insight into the current situation regarding adult literacies provision in the UK, existing literature in the field gives an overview of its historical development. It provides a picture of the situation regarding adult literacies provision at certain points in time, often identifying a sequence of distinct stages in the development of provision, which are characterised by changes to policy and funding mechanisms, by the presence or lack of qualifications, by the nature of the curriculum and of the learner cohort. The time boundaries of these stages vary between analyses, although most analyses start from the 1970s, when literacy was a fairly new aspect of adult education, and end in the early 2000s, by which time it was established as a mainstream area within the lifelong learning sector (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006).

The 1970s are seen as providing the foundations of adult literacies provision in the UK, from the point when a British Association of Settlements survey highlighted a need for adult literacies development in the UK, and 'Right to Read', the first national literacy campaign to have government support, was established with the BBC's involvement through its 'On the Move' programmes (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006; Hillier, 2009; Ade-Ojo and Duckworth, 2017). Hamilton and Hillier (2006) point out, however, that adult literacies provision was fragmented during the 1970s. Teaching spaces were often temporary and not always fit for purpose. There was very little standardisation in the way classes were delivered or even in the way they were described; 'Remedial English' and 'compensatory classes' are given as examples (ibid: 4). Adult literacies provision in the 1970s is also described as informal, lacking a set curriculum or published resources, offering few qualifications and being heavily dependent on voluntary teachers. Provision tended to be planned around individual learners' needs (Taylor, 2008a; Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton and Hillier, 2006). Ade-Ojo and Duckworth (2017: 393) identify a lack of 'definitive' policy for adult literacies during this period, but describe the government funding that was available and the establishment of the Adult Literacy Resource Agency.

The 1980s and 1990s, meanwhile, are characterized in the literature as seeing a slower development in provision, but nevertheless witnessing further change, with a move towards greater government control, more qualifications and standardisation of practice and the further development of funding mechanisms. A change in focus during this time, with greater links between literacy, employability and economic concerns is also recognised (Taylor, 2008a; Hamilton and Hillier, 2006; 2007). Hamilton and Hillier explain that during the 1990s, adult literacies provision became, under the guise of Adult Literacy, Language and Numeracy (ALLN), a 'designated area of vocational study' though they argue that this had 'growing discourses of accountability and performativity' in the public sector among its influences (2006: 13; 2007: 584). This period is also marked as preparing the way for the Skills for Life initiative in England particularly following the outcome of the Organisation for Economic, Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) findings and the Moser report (Department for Education and Skills, 1999) which raised concerns about adult literacy levels in the country (Hamilton and Tett, 2012; Hillier, 2009; Appleby and Bathmaker, 2006).

The early 2000s are recognised, then, as a period of development in adult literacies provision across the four nations of the United Kingdom. The Skills for Life initiative in England provided the first national standards in adult literacy (and numeracy), a core curriculum and a set of qualifications for learners along with professional qualifications for their teachers (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006; Taylor, 2008b; Hodgson, Edward and Gregson, 2007; Hamilton and Pitt, 2011b). To date, Skills for Life appears to be the aspect of UK adult literacies provision which has prompted the most discussion. Hodgson et al. (2007: 17) for instance, describe its impact on provision as 'huge and unprecedented' while Ade-Ojo and Duckworth (2017: 399) comment that it was the 'most significant policy' in the UK's lifelong learning sector in the past twenty years. Skills for Life has also been the subject of significant criticism, however, particularly for being instrumental in its focus on measurable outcomes such as targets, tests and qualifications while paying insufficient attention to learners' individual needs and backgrounds (Duckworth and Brzeski, 2015).

The other UK nations witnessed similar developments, however; Wales, following devolution in 1999, introduced its own adult literacy strategy (Hamilton and Tett, 2012) and Northern Ireland followed with a similar initiative to Skills for Life, providing qualifications for learners and tutors, along with a core curriculum (Hamilton and Tett, 2012; Irwin, 2019). Scotland launched its own policy for adult literacy (and numeracy) in 2001, but this is known more for its social practice approach to literacies, than for its similarities to the policies established in the other home nations at this time, although it shared a similar influence in the outcome of the OECD's IALS outcome

(Maclachlan and Tett, 2006; Hamilton and Tett, 2012; Ackland, 2013).

No other era in adult literacies education in the UK has been the focus of so much analysis in the literature as that received by the Skills for Life period; most analyses end with this, perhaps reflecting the trajectory of provision in the UK which from the 1970s witnessed a developing government interest in adult literacies provision that peaked with the introduction of Skills for Life and similar developments in the other UK countries. The Centenary Commission on Adult Education (2019) comments on the successes of the Skills for Life era, but reports a decline in funding and participation since then. The 100 Project, therefore, aimed to offer an insight into the implications of this situation for current adult literacies providers and practitioners.

Methodology

Methodological approach

The RaPAL 100 Project set out to survey 100 providers of adult literacies education by means of an online questionnaire (for the sake of economy) and as far as possible through in-person visits, some of which might involve, as well as a semi-structured interview, the collection of additional data in the form of observational notes, photographs and/or documentary evidence (e.g. of students' work).

The project, at its original conception, was inspired and informed by the lead researcher's development of an 'ethnographic perspective' that gave her PhD research 'a greater *lived* dimension (Freeman, 2017: 120). The audience for our research encompasses a broad range of students, practitioners, academics and members of organisations and agencies connected with adult literacies and adult and community education. We therefore felt that outputs that illuminated lived experience, described and illustrated interesting examples of provision and provided a platform for voices from the field, as well as discussion of key themes that emerged in relation to policy and practice, would be of as much, if not more, interest than findings that were over-theorised, abstract or statistical.

True ethnography would not have been a feasible approach, requiring as it would long-term engagement and participation, or even complete immersion, in the settings to be studied (Spradley, 1979; 1980; Walford, 2009). From the outset, the RaPAL 100 Project seemed likely to only have an ethnographic character in a 'partial and limited' way (Richardson, 1997, cited in Freeman, 2017), yet we aspired to create, as Freeman had done with her doctoral research, 'an understanding of values from the inside, rather than compiling a more specific, scientific outsider's report' (Freeman, 2017).

Furthermore, some of the research outputs have auto-ethnographic overtones; we have embraced forms of writing that are more personal than is characteristic of much

academic research; we have, in places, in acknowledgement of 'the inextricable link between the personal and the cultural' (Wall, 2006), explicitly drawn on our own experiences to make sense of our data.

Research instruments

Online Questionnaire

A qualitative questionnaire tool was developed containing a series of mainly open-ended questions (See Appendix A) that participants could answer in their own time. We made a printable version available and invited people to answer the questions via a telephone interview or in-person visit if they preferred but the majority of participants completed the questionnaire on their own online.

Online qualitative surveys have advantages over interviews for unfunded research such as the RaPAL 100 Project insofar as they offer a cheap and comparatively easy way of reaching geographically dispersed participants (Braun et al., 2017b cited in Braun et al, 2020). Questionnaires are primarily associated with quantitative studies and, without the researcher being present (as in an interview) to probe and draw out more detail, self-report questionnaires will not always stimulate detailed answers. Survey data lacks the multi-dimensional characteristic of ethnographic data, however many of our survey respondents, like those in the examples in Braun et al (2020), provided '*valuable* accounts of their experiences and perspectives'.

The refinement of the questionnaire through several iterations was carried out with input from all members of the research team. It was then tested for technical issues on a number of different devices by members of the project team and other 'dummy' participants (respondents who did not form part of the target audience). It was further piloted by a small number of respondents who provided feedback on their experience of answering the questions. We began collecting responses in December 2019 and although the vast majority of responses were received by April 2020, the online survey remained live until July 2020.

Soon after the UK went into lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the team realised that massive changes were occurring to adult literacies teaching and learning. Some follow-up questions were added to the website with the aim of capturing some of what was happening during the pandemic (see Appendix B). These did not undergo pre-testing or piloting due to the speed at which things were changing and our desire to quickly implement some way of capturing some of this.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were guided by a schedule based on the questionnaire, which was used flexibly to prompt when necessary while allowing interviewees to raise and talk at length on issues that were important to them. There was no official separate piloting of the interviews as we did not aim for a standardised process more befitting of quantitative research. Each qualitative interview is unique as it depends on the rapport between interviewer and interviewee (Spradley, 1979). Nevertheless, experiences of the early interviews were shared among the team and also informed the revision of the questionnaire in January 2020.

Participants

Each member of the geographically dispersed team was either currently working in the sector or had previously worked in the sector and initially sought to use their existing networks to arrange as many visits and in-situ interviews as possible. Potential participants were invited to participate in a telephone interview or complete an online questionnaire if they were unable to accommodate a visit. Attempts were made to snowball recruitment and reach contacts of contacts. The team also reached out with personal emails to other providers, initially within their geographical region in order to make in-person visits feasible on a minimal budget, and ultimately further afield. We also used RaPAL's network and social media to reach as many providers in as many parts of the UK as possible.

Figure 1 shows the approximate geographical spread of the participants. The map markers do not always clearly indicate the number of participants from a single area, and they may indicate a city or county but not the specific postcode. A small number of markers represent the location of a 'head office' or administrative base rather than the venues where provision takes place, which may be dispersed across more than one location. Furthermore, a proportion of questionnaires were completed anonymously and so we may in fact have data from locations that are not indicated on the map. However, as Figure 1 shows, we were successful in reaching out to the four nations of the UK, even if certain regions were under-represented.

Figure 1: Map of UK showing geographical spread of participants in the RaPAL 100 Project

We specifically sought participants from as many different types of provision as possible. The majority of responses were received from FE colleges and from local adult and community learning providers (i.e. local authority provision), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Type of provision respondents represented

Type of provision	Number of respondents
FE College	17
Adult / Community Education	27
National Charity	7
Local Charity	7
Work-based learning	1
Union Learn	0
Other	2

Several respondents indicated that their provision represented more than one of our categories (e.g. 'adult/community education' and 'local charity'). Respondents who indicated 'Other' described their provision as:

- Prison (n=1)
- Community centre within library (n=1)

We invited participation from anyone involved in the teaching of adult literacies and achieved representation from people in a variety of job roles. Figure 2 displays the key words from participants' job titles that occurred at least twice in our data, with the size of the word giving an indication of frequency (the larger the word, the more times it occurred). The majority were involved in teaching (e.g. 'volunteer tutor', 'adult literacy teacher', 'ESW lecturer') or management (e.g. 'Skills for Life Manager', 'Adult Learning Manager').

As we wanted to hear from people in a range of roles, none of our questions were compulsory and the questionnaires were often only partially completed, with more detailed answers given in different sections according to the individual respondent's knowledge and interest. We also had more than one response from the same organisation which has implications for any quantification of the data, but this approach enabled people with a range of perspectives to contribute the experiences and opinions that were important to them and helps us to provide a rich and varied 'patchwork' description, even if not a complete picture.

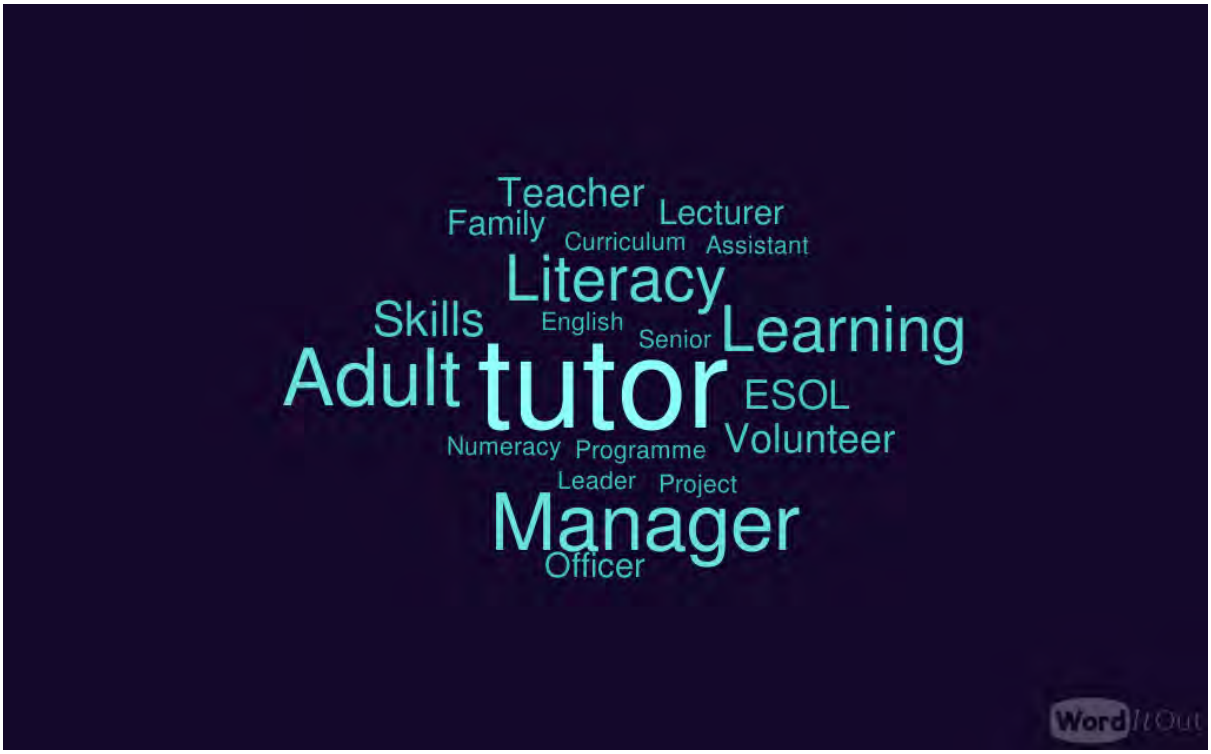

Figure 2: Key words from participants' job titles (excluding those that occur only once in the data)

Our sampling strategy, beginning with personal contacts, was possible because of the researchers' professional backgrounds and would afford researchers a degree of insider status within many of the settings, potentially making visits to classes and the collection of rich data possible. Thus it was an appropriate strategy given our methodological inspiration. Reaching beyond our personal networks via social media broadened the participant base. A limitation of this approach is that it achieves a volunteer sample that cannot be assumed to represent all provision. However, we illuminate some examples of provision and perspectives on that provision which readers are invited to consider in relation to their own contexts, and we identified some themes, issues and concerns which may form the basis for further research into specific aspects of adult literacies teaching and learning.

Researcher positionality and bias

The research team all have their own subjective experience of adult literacies teaching and, all being members of RaPAL, share certain perspectives on adult literacies, which undoubtedly impact on the way in which we framed our questions, interpreted what others said and reported on our findings.

Many of the people who invited researchers to visit in person to undertake an interview appeared to be motivated by their commitment to their work in adult literacies. Some may also have hoped that their involvement might lead to funding or staff development opportunities. In some cases, the interviewees were personally

known to the researchers or had some familiarity with and affinity to RaPAL and its aims. This was advantageous in that the researchers did not need to establish rapport but were immediately welcomed as 'insiders' and interviewees started to speak with a high degree of trust and confidence in the purposes of the research. However, it may also have implications for the nature of the information that was divulged.

As an example of real-world research in a broadly social constructionist orientation, subjectivity is inherent (Robson and McCartan, 2016) and, with this in mind, our readers should consider for themselves the relevance of what they read to their own contexts.

Response to Covid-19

Towards the end of our planned period of data collection, the UK went into Covid-19 lockdown and all education providers were suddenly faced with the challenges of continuing to support their learners without access to the classroom. Realising that the practices people had just told us about were suddenly changing at an unprecedented speed and in unprecedented ways, we attempted to capture some of what was happening by hurriedly appending a few new questions to the online questionnaire and inviting people to talk to us or write for us about lockdown teaching and learning. There was no time for piloting of the new questions, and the responses were not numerous, but nevertheless valuable as a record of the unique situation that we found ourselves in in March 2020.

Consent

The need to obtain informed consent from participants was never in question, but the issue of anonymity was discussed at length before we began our data collection. Whether researchers should assume that participants' anonymity should be protected and take responsibility for this, or whether to allow participants to decide is far from straightforward (Wiles et al, 2008) and members of the team had differing opinions on this. Ultimately, it was decided to offer participants the choice to have their contribution acknowledged or to remain anonymous, as the target audience was deemed to be capable of assessing the implications of having their name associated with the research. This of course has implications for the type of information individual participants were willing to divulge to us. A full list of contributors who expressed a desire to be acknowledged can be found in appendix C (note that this is not a full list of participants as a significant proportion have opted out).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was driven to some extent by the questions that we asked, which pre-defined topics of interest. For example, knowing that the government has reduced funding for adult literacies provision nationally over recent years, we wanted to explore how this has been experienced by our participants and how they have

responded to it. Within the topics we asked about, we explored the data using a general inductive approach which allowed us to identify common themes and to highlight issues that we had not specifically asked about.

Where appropriate in our research outputs, we have represented some of our data numerically, reflected on our experiences of undertaking the research, interpreted what we learnt in the light of our own professional experience and knowledge of policy and practice, or presented a summary and commentary on an individual interview or particular cluster of interviews to provide greater insight into what is happening in example settings or to allow specific voices to be heard. Overall, our analysis is 'light touch' compared to many academic studies, with a large proportion of straightforward descriptive summary that is not strongly grounded in any particular theoretical or epistemological tradition. This ensures our outputs are 'down to earth' and, we hope, appeal to the wide range of people in our potential audience.

Discussion

The RaPAL 100 Project was intended to provide 'an '***insight into what is happening within adult literacy*** provision in the UK'. The idea was that we would present not a complete picture but an illustration of the diversity of provision on offer at a particular point in time: a 'snapshot' of the adult literacies landscape in the four countries of the UK. What we discovered is what could be called a 'patchwork' of provision: a wide range and variety of activities going on under the umbrella of adult literacies. This idea of a 'patchwork' could also be applied to our research outputs.

Influenced by ethnographic and auto-ethnographic ideals where the author is writing in 'a highly personalized style, drawing on his or her experience to extend understanding about a societal phenomenon' (Wall, 2006: 146) it was our intention that the team, all with a background in the sector, would have the opportunity to bring to bear their own experiences and perspectives to the data provided by the participants. We also wanted to give voice to people in the field and allow them to contribute their own writings if they wanted to. In light of this not all outputs have been conventional academic articles as there has been a level of self-reflection in some of the outputs that is quite subjective. However, in light of the project's aims all are considered valuable research outputs precisely because the researchers' perspective shines through in many of these writings.

In the RaPAL Journal volumes 100(i) and 100(ii) we have presented a 'patchwork' of different writings. Some are accounts of examples of provision, based on interviews and are quite subjective and personal. For example, in Volume 100(i) edition we hear from Sarah Freeman about her interviews with providers in Coventry and Bristol, where despite the constraints of ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) results-oriented funding, she found herself (Freeman, 2020a: 17 – 20) 'in awe of the imagination and tenacity of the staff members [she] interviewed' (ibid: 20). In the same volume Jo Dixon presents a unique perspective in her report on an interview with Sue Thain at the British Army Headquarters near Andover, where she heard about adult

literacies provision in the Army and the 'clear committed and well-resourced' (Dixon, 2020a: 25) English and Maths provision available to soldiers (ibid: 21 – 25). In this volume we also report how we found the previously vibrant literacy service in Northern Ireland to have almost totally disappeared (Lambe, 2020a: 42 – 44).

Other articles came from in-depth personal contributions that were prompted by the additional questions we added to the survey after lockdown began in March 2020. These pieces capture a moment in time and the changes and challenges it brought to the sector. For example, we have Paul Sceeny's reflections on the CAG process during lockdown and the possibility that we may never 'look at qualifications in quite the same way again' (Sceeny, 2020: 57). Diane Gardner, in the same volume 100(ii) talks about the creative ways staff 'went the extra mile to ensure their students achieved' (Gardner, 2020: 54) including taking a student through final assessment on a WhatsApp call (ibid).

This summary report is intended to tie together all the diverse strands from the 100 project 'patchwork' of outputs. The Appendix at the end of this Journal lists, and gives a brief overview, of all of the individual outputs related to the RaPAL 100 Project which can be found in full in RaPAL Journal volumes 100(i) and 100(ii). Here we discuss some of the broader themes that were developed from the research data. These themes include: funding issues; perceptions that ESOL learners are being inappropriately placed in literacy classes; the return of the volunteer to adult literacies provision; and the increasing use of phonics in an adult literacies' context.

Funding

While one of the questions we asked of participants was about the funding source for their provision (question 2.8) over half of them were tutors/teachers and did not have access to that kind of information. Of those who did reply they reported receiving funding from such varied sources as charities, trusts, foundations, lottery funding and local authority funding, right up to government funding streams such as through the Essential Skills Funding Authority (ESFA) (Islington, Adult Learning and Community Service). One of the main issues highlighted by the data is the impact of the 40% reduction in the adult skills budget since 2010 (Freeman, 2020a: 17) and the lengths organisations have to go to source funds. In addition, the limitations as to what can be funded under Functional Skills could be seen as impacting adversely on provision across the sector. It is intended that the data relating to funding will be analysed in greater depth and published in a future edition of the RaPAL journal.

Digital

Three aspects of digital learning were noted in the interviews: embedded within literacy or ESOL classes; specific digital learning classes (usually called IT or ICT); digital learning to enable tutors to teach it. However, one of the key issues highlighted across the data was inconsistencies in terms of availability of infrastructure and equipment, with inner-city provider Islington reporting the lack of a reliable, or even any, wi-fi service in the community centres where classes are held. A further point as noted by

Dixon, is the 'considerable variation in teachers' confidence in using computers in their teaching after twenty years of promoting the use of ICT in adult literacies provision' (Dixon, 2020b: 33).

ESOL

Demand and provision for ESOL seemed to vary widely across the sectors. In the adult community learning sector demand was reported from an influx of European learners, and others reported demand specifically in family learning and workplace. There is no funding for ESOL as a statutory right (in contrast to literacy and numeracy). However, practitioners appear to be highly inventive in finding space somewhere to accommodate students' needs (see Dixon, 2020c: 32 – 43) which in turn seems to be leading to a lot of crossover between literacy and ESOL departments, with learners being passed between the two according to need but also availability. From the perspective of participants in the RaPAL 100 survey ESOL students more than any other type of student were accessing literacy provision when a different course might be more appropriate. The picture painted by participants is one of complexity where the costs associated with ESOL programmes (for students), the non-acceptance of ESOL Skills for Life qualifications on a par with FSE and supply and demand issues were all contributory factors (see Dixon, 2020c: 32 – 43).

Volunteers

One of the surprising findings from the research was that volunteer tutors, having almost disappeared from the sector following Skills for Life 2001, were once again a feature of adult literacy provision. Over half of those who filled out the Survey 100 questionnaire, and 12 of 19 interviewees reported employing volunteer tutors across a range of provision and in a variety of roles. As well as providing important in-class support to students with additional needs, volunteers were considered the only realistic option to the intensive, flexible and needs-based tuition provided by charitable organisations such as Thames Reach, Possobilities and Read Easy. Lambe's report in the winter edition of RaPAL 100 (ii) discusses this aspect of the project findings (2020b: 9 – 17).

Phonics

In the RaPAL 100 Project reports of the renewed use of phonics, while not extensive, were enough to prompt the inclusion of phonics as an important feature worth highlighting. Freeman reports how FE colleges such in Islington, Bedford and Glasgow are all using phonics in their 16+ provision (2020b: 20). One contributor suggested the advance towards phonics in adult learning is associated with changes to funding and assessment objectives (Large FE provider). The availability of a number of phonics schemes suitable for adults appears to be a further contributory factor, with Simon Fuller of Islington reporting using the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) tool kit as a basis for an after-class spelling group (Freeman, 2020b: 20). Diane Gardner's 'City Phonics' is another popular programme suitable for adults as is 'Turning Pages', a phonics scheme specifically designed for use in one-to-one situations is used by the

charitable organisation Read Easy, a rapidly growing organisation which supports adults in learning to read.

Conclusion

The aim of the 100 Project was to provide a view of the current situation with regard to adult literacies provision in the UK through online surveys and qualitative interviews. Although the project didn't reach the 100 providers and practitioners originally intended, it has resulted in a 'patchwork' view of provision, along with some insight into its nature and into some of the challenges faced by providers, practitioners and learners. In the literature review we discussed how provision developed within fifty years from being largely informal, fragmented, non-accredited and learner-centred to be much more professionalised and controlled in character, with greater concern for standardisation and qualifications. While some of the data from the 100 Project suggest some constraints as a result of this shift (in relation to the provision that can be offered under Functional Skills funding, for instance) it also highlights a few examples of provision that was still being tailored to the needs of particular groups of learners and of the creativity of some practitioners in finding ways of accommodating individual learners' needs in the face of inflexible funding mechanisms. This adaptation to learners' particular needs is an aspect of current provision which seems to hark back to pre-Skills for Life practices, as does the return to prominence of volunteer teachers.

In addition to providing a snapshot of current provision, the project has also identified a number of key themes which we believe warrant further exploration, technology for instance. The huge development that has happened across the sector in this area has become apparent from the project and the articles resulting from it that have been published in recent editions of the Journal. In particular the potentially complex issues of the variations discovered in practitioners' digital confidence and inconsistencies in learners' access to digital technologies across the provision. ESOL could be an additional area for further investigation, with its variations in demand and provision and the problems of funding and lack of entitlement to ESOL as opposed to Functional Skills; ESOL learners' individual situations seem to be more nuanced than current mechanisms allow for.

Following the project, our analysis of the data and the various articles from contributors to Journals 100(i) and 100(ii) then, we were left with a sense that adult literacies provision in the UK was evolving and that where there is a need, somebody would find a way to provide it. Hopefully the one size fits all approach of recent years will continue to be undermined on the one hand by practitioners who are finding space for the students who wish to learn and on the other by organisations who see a need and go about filling it, even after the challenges and changes brought about by the Covid-19 crisis.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

1: Overview

Please tell us what type of organisation you are working in. The other questions in this section are optional.

1.1 What is the name of your organisation?

1.2 What type of organisation is it? *Please check ONE box.* *

☐ FE College

☐ Adult/Community education

☐ National charity

☐ Local charity

☐ Work-based learning

☐ Union Learn

☐ Other (please specify)

1.3 Approximately how many learners take part in adult literacy provision per year (if known)?

1.4 What is your job title / role?

2: Information about your classes/sessions

If you feel that some of our questions are not relevant to you, or you do not know the answers, please feel free to leave them blank.

2.1 List the types of classes your organisation offers. (E.g. teacher-led classes, learning centres, informal learning groups, one-to-one support.)

2.2 What are typical/ minimum/ maximum class/ group sizes?

2.3 How long are the courses that are run in your adult literacy provision? (E.g. one term, one year.)

2.4 For how long may learners participate in subsidised, supported adult literacy provision?

2.5 Is learning organised in (Tick all that apply and comment below in 'other' if you wish):

☐ **Levels**
☐ **Mixed levels**
☐ **One-to-one**
☐ **Other (please specify):**

2.6 Is learning (tick all that apply):

☐ **All accredited**
☐ **Part accredited and part non-accredited**
☐ **Not accredited**

2.7 Which qualifications do you offer or what processes do you use, if any, to measure or record progress and achievement?

2.8 From where do you obtain funding for your literacy work (if known)? Please name your funding sources where possible.

3: History and locality

If you feel that some of our questions are not relevant to you, or you do not know the answers, please feel free to leave them blank.

3.1 How long (if known) has your organisation offered adult literacy and other basic education classes?

3.2 If you know about the history of availability of provision in your locality over the years it would be of particular interest to our researchers to know how this originally came about and how it has fluctuated in recent years.

4: Local needs and curriculum

If you feel that some of our questions are not relevant to you, or you do not know the answers, please feel free to leave them blank.

4.1 Does the organisation offer adult literacy provision within the community aimed at local people? (Please describe e.g. libraries, hostels, workplace learning, vocational training centres, parents' classes in school, women only classes, hospital education centre etc.).

4.2 How are digital technologies used by learners and is this a specific part of the course or embedded?

4.3 Are there significant numbers of learners in the organisation studying adult literacy for whom a different kind of programme might be more appropriate but is not available? Make a note of any such situation that you know of. (E.g. ESOL, SpLD, etc.)

4.4 Following on from question 4.3, describe any difficulties which arise from having to bring together students with widely different needs, and how your organisation may be overcoming these difficulties. (Optional)

5: Staff population

The following questions are about the people, paid and unpaid, who work directly with learners on the development of their reading and writing. If you cannot answer a particular question, please feel free to leave it blank and move on to the next.

5.1.1 How many full-time permanent paid staff are employed in adult literacy provision?

5.1.2 How many fractional permanent paid staff are there?

5.1.3 How many sessional (hourly paid) staff are there?

5.1.4 How many volunteers are involved in adult literacy provision?

5.2 Have there been recent cutbacks or other changes to staffing in your organization?

5.3 Describe the types of specialist training that staff have undergone to teach or

support the teaching of adult literacy (including volunteers if relevant).

5.4 What roles, if any, do volunteers fulfil in relation to the adult literacy provision (E.g. 1:1 tutor, classroom assistant)?

5.5 How important is it to be able to recruit volunteers to support adult literacy classes in the organisation?

6: Additional comments

6.1 Please use this space if you would like to tell us more about recent successes or challenges that your adult literacy provision has faced.

Confidentiality and anonymity statement

Please select the appropriate statement to confirm whether you would prefer to remain anonymous or whether you would like your contribution to this research acknowledged in our research outputs. *

Please check ONE box.

☐ I would like my participation in this research to be confidential and the data I provided in this questionnaire to be anonymous as far as this is possible (please note that, although every attempt will be taken to remove identifying details, if you have described any particularly unique provision then it may still be possible for some readers to deduce the name of the organisation from the information provided)

☐ I am happy for my name and organisation to be directly associated with the data I provide (in this case we may not anonymise your data while working with it and may choose to attribute example data or quotes to you).

☐ I would like my participation to be acknowledged but do not want my name and organisation to be directly associated with the data I provide (in this case, your name and organisation will appear in an acknowledgement but your data will be anonymised as far as possible. Please note that although every attempt will be taken to remove identifying details, if
you have described any particularly unique provision then it may still be possible for some readers to deduce the name of the organisation from the information provided).

Please provide your name as you wish it to appear in any research outputs:

(Optional)

Please provide your job title as you wish it to appear in any research outputs:
(Optional)

Please provide your organisation name as you wish it to appear in any research outputs:
(Optional)

Appendix B: Post-lockdown questions

Adult literacies learning and teaching during Covid-19 and beyond

1. How have your delivery methods changed since the Covid-19 lockdown? E.g. resources such as materials, activities, teacher contact time and anything else that may be relevant. Mention any resources you have used in particular and how effective these have been.

2. How has the Covid-19 lockdown affected existing learners' and potential/new learners' access to learning?

3. Have learners been pro-active in shaping/directing their own learning? If so, how?

4. How has the Covid-19 lockdown impacted on the effectiveness of your adult literacies delivery and progression towards learning goals?

5. What do you anticipate may be the long-term impact of Covid-19 on your adult literacies provision? How will it shape your provision in the future when lockdown has finished?

6. Any other comments about the impact of Covid-19 on your provision? (e.g. challenges, successes, surprises?)

Appendix C: Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their participation in the RaPAL 100 Project. Please note that this is not a complete list of participants: we extend our thanks also to those people who participated anonymously or who requested that their involvement remain confidential. It provides a picture of the situation regarding adult literacies provision at certain points in time, often identifying a sequence of distinct stages in the development of provision, which are characterised by changes to policy and funding mechanisms, by the presence or lack of qualifications,

Karen Arkle, Family learning Teacher, Cardiff and Vale College

Rebekah Ball, Family Learning Teacher, Cardiff and Vale College

Deborah Barton, Head of Adult Skills, West Suffolk College

Katie Blair, Volunteer ESOL Teacher, A Community Centre in Birmingham

Pauline Clarke, ESOL Tutor, WEA

Catherine Crerar, ALN and ESOL Practitioner, LEAD Scotland

Amanda Derry, Community Adult Learning Tutor, Workers' Educational Association (WEA)

Margaret Elliot, Volunteer coordinator, Possobilities, Possilpark, Glasgow

Lesley Elliott, Test & Learn Pilot Tutor, Wirral Lifelong Learning Service

Simon Fuller, Curriculum Manager for Adult Community Learning, London Borough of Islington

Diane Gardner, Curriculum Head - Widening Access and Community and Head of Applied Research in Adult Literacy, Citizen Literacy Project, City of Glasgow College

Sue Haigh, Lead English Tutor, Surrey Adult Learning

Rowan Harris, CLEAR Project

Steve Horby, Manager, Seed Enterprises CIC, Ellesmere Port and 3rd Space well-being group, Chester

Collette Jones, Volunteer lead mentor, 'Uplift' well-being group, Chester

Nicky Jowitt, Centre Manager, Manor Training & Resource Centre

Thomas Le Seelleur, ESOL Lecturer

Rachel McCurry, Curriculum Leader (Skills), Kent Adult Education Skills

Arthur McKeown, Volunteer trainer, Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre

Donna Moore, Glasgow Women's Library

Carole Murcutt, Essential Skills Manager, Torfaen Adult Community Learning

Kevin Norley, Lecturer, Bedford College

Julia Olisa, Literacy tutor and service founder, Thames Reach

Jo Porrino, Derby Adult Learning Service

Hilary Russell, Volunteer tutor, Preston Community Library

Debbie Ryle, Programme Manager, Morley College

Kerry Scattergood, Adult literacy tutor

Maria Sotiriou, Assistant Principal, Redbridge Institute

Lily Staunton Howe, Assistant Programme Manager, Adult Reading, The Reading Agency

Sue Thain MEd MBE, Ministry of Defence

Ginny Williams-Ellis, Chief Executive, Read Easy

Developing in digital skills with space to think

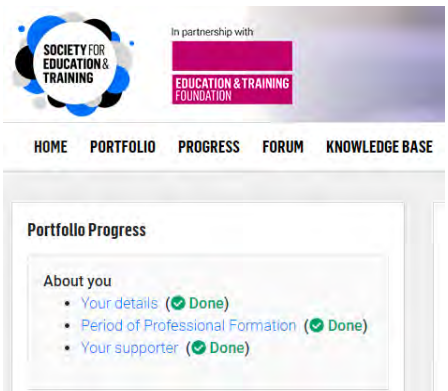
Kayte Haselgrove

Kayte Haselgrove is CPD and Learning Manager at Bishop Burton and Riseholme College, FE and Skills Lecturer at the University of Derby, National Development Lead in English for the Education and Training Foundation and owner of EduKayte Consultancy. She has worked as a mentor, a teacher, course leader and Head of Department for English and Maths, Teacher Training and Teaching and Learning at colleges in Yorkshire. She is also an External Examiner for the Secondary PGCE and MEd in Leadership and Management at the University of Buckingham. Kayte has been involved in a range of action research projects with the Education and Training Foundation, both as a participant and mentor. She can be contacted at kayte@edukayte.co.uk.

Introduction

Having worked closely in my early teaching career with a friend and colleague who was both fearless and excellent at using learning technology (LT) effectively, I've always felt very confident in giving things a try. As a result, I have experience in using LT in teaching and have delivered training on multiple occasions on using LT to develop teaching and learning. So, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, I wasn't fazed by moving to online meetings and interactions. I was lucky (or some may say unlucky) that I was on maternity leave when the first lockdown happened. I didn't have to face the difficulties my co-workers faced, teaching their practical subjects online, or the uncertainty of examinations and the impact this would have on accountability and student progress. I had the space to observe the impact of the pandemic and the responses from my colleagues, from an outside perspective - without the panic. The sessions I did deliver, I had the time and space to plan them carefully.

Despite having been a teacher (and in more recent years, a manager) in Further Education (FE) for the last 10 years, while on maternity leave, I decided to complete my professional formation as an FE lecturer. This led me to reflect on my strengths as a teacher and those skills which needed evaluating in a deeper way than just day-to-day reflection on practice. After completing a self-analysis, I decided that I would work on developing my digital skills further. After all, the world was changing, quickly and dramatically, and going in this direction.

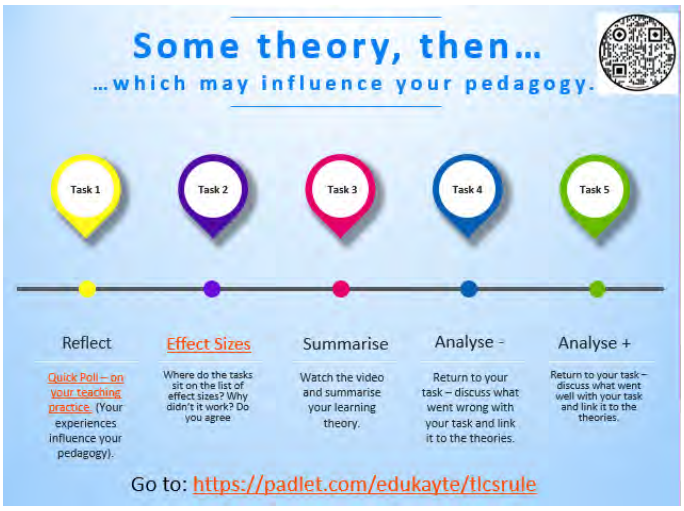


In this paper, I intend to outline my journey of development in digital skills, including what I learnt and how it has informed my practice. I hope that this will help others who

haven't had the space to think that I've been fortunate enough to have during the pandemic.

Pandemic panic

Prior to the pandemic, I had taken part in numerous Zoom meetings, training sessions and social calls, so this 'new' concept of interacting online was not really new to me, at all. However, delivering sessions online *was* brand new, so my response was to take previously delivered sessions and modify them for teaching online. There were still tasks where there had been tasks before and question and answer where there had been question and answer when the sessions had been intended for face-to-face delivery. I simply modified the methods so that they were suitable for online teaching but aimed to achieve the same results. The students *almost* had the same experience as they would have in class. There were the usual prior knowledge checks, group and individual tasks, a variety of activities and checks on progress and understanding, assessment for and of learning and a broad use of LT which was suitable for face-to-face and online learning. It felt like this was a quick, easy fix for desperate times which benefited both the students and myself as a tutor, not having to redesign materials, but I wasn't taking advantage of the range of LT out there which, used effectively, can enrich the learning experience.



Synchronous and asynchronous

As I started on my journey of professional formation, exploring how I needed to modify my practice for online delivery, the terms 'synchronous' and 'asynchronous' were repeated in every conversation. Familiar words to me, but ones I hadn't heard used quite so frequently in the many conversations I'd had previously about teaching, learning and assessment. Synchronous, referring to a teacher delivering to students in real time and asynchronous meaning providing activities for students to complete at their own pace, in their own time. The conversations focussed on how the two types of teaching could work together in harmony in order to engage students and allow them the space and time to complete activities effectively, while also providing them with the support they needed to develop individually. Now, this is the bread and butter of a

well-practised online tutor, but as a practitioner who was newer to the concept, I started to get the impression that my entire way of delivery needed to change.

From colleagues across the education sector, and parents and young people I knew who were engaging in home-schooling, very quickly it became clear that, unfortunately for some, there were teachers out there who were wholly relying on synchronous *or* asynchronous teaching and learning.

Considering the social interactions of the classroom, the impact this has on learning and developing our students, as well as the positive impact this interaction with others has on mental health and engagement, it seemed clear to me that a wholly 'asynchronous' approach would have a huge negative impact on our students. A completely 'synchronous' approach, would be helpful for students who were then able to work with their peers and engage in live feedback from their tutor, but this approach would be exhausting for everyone involved in a face-to-face classroom environment, let alone while also staring into a computer screen.

Dissolving the screen

One of my colleagues, who works in a secondary school, used the phrase 'dissolving the screen' during our discussions about teaching and learning online. This phrase led me to reflect on whether we should be aiming to 'dissolve the screen'? Or should we acknowledge the screen between us and our students, and be transparent about the challenges it raises for both student and teacher? Of course, the phrase doesn't mean to be dishonest and use trickery to make your students believe they are really in the classroom, but perhaps recognition that we can't actually dissolve the screen, we are teaching online, and highlighting the benefits of this method, might be more appropriate?

A need to adapt, not a need to change

During a conversation with a fellow teacher trainer about key learning principles and online teaching, he pointed out that, 'the Initial Teacher Education core content framework hasn't changed, the Ofsted framework hasn't changed, and the professional standards haven't changed.' To summarise, the expectations haven't changed on teachers, so why should pedagogy change just because we are teaching online instead of face-to-face? We still need to apply evidence-based methods of teaching and apply behaviour management, check learning and evidence progress…it is simply the medium that has changed. So, an early conclusion during my professional formation was that we need to adapt, not change.

The transition to a new normal

As the pandemic spread across the world, I don't think any of us realised the impact it would have on our lives for the foreseeable future. I remember being in disbelief as schools closed, as our students were sent home and staff began delivering sessions from their children's homework desks and kitchen tables. There was a level of support provided for this transition but with the sheer panic the world was feeling, I don't think much of it was really retained. We went into survival mode and did what we could, in all elements of our lives.

Fast forward a few months and the new normal had begun to set in. People were adapting, training was taking place and teachers were getting guidance from their leaders on their planned approach for teaching and learning online. At this point, I was able to tap into a vast range of professional development on offer which related to my area for development in my professional formation.

Diving into development

My next stage was to wade through the professional development and identify what would help to develop my knowledge, understanding and skills in this area most effectively, while always contemplating the balance between synchronous and asynchronous methods, the concept of 'dissolving the screen' and remembering that the expectations from frameworks, curriculum content, students and management would always remain the same.

- **Conversations with experts from other providers**

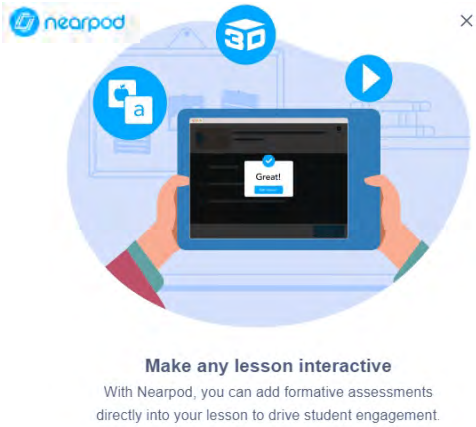
  Actions taken and thoughts on planning: When engaging in conversations with colleagues specifically for professional development, it is important to choose carefully who you have those conversations with. In order to get the most out of this activity, their guidance needs to be reputable and evidence-based. I chose to contact one learning technologist who has experience both in FE and HE, and one Professor of Learning Theory, who currently works at a university as a lecturer in psychology.

  What I learnt: Both repeatedly used the terms 'synchronous' and 'asynchronous' and provided me with examples of how they worked well together. This was predominantly tasks set, videos, research etc. but always with interactions with the teacher either one-to-one, in groups or as a class, in order to discuss what they had learnt on their own. They also shared tools I had either not used before, such as Gathertown, a video-calling tool which allows multiple conversations to take place, much like a physical classroom space, or

had heard of but was yet to experiment with, such as H5P, a tool used to create interactive teaching and learning content.

- **Training from staff members who are 'on the ground'**

Actions taken and thoughts on planning: Another incredibly valuable method of professional development is the sharing of best practice. Done well, this can have a huge positive impact on our teaching. As part of my research, I attended (and arranged) sessions with lecturers in my own college on tools they had experimented with in their (virtual) classrooms.



What I learnt: I saw how my colleagues were using Nearpod, Gathertown, H5P and Microsoft Teams. They could talk honestly about the use of the tools they were working with (opposed to attending training delivered by the person representing the teaching tool). What works well, what does not work so well, how to modify it in different contexts - from their actual experiences. The sessions also provided an opportunity for innovation and collaboration with colleagues, which created an environment full of opportunities to learn about how you can use others' experiences to develop your own approaches to teaching and learning. Each person who delivered talked about how these tools could be used both synchronously and asynchronously (even if they didn't use the terminology), which demonstrated how those teachers were working successfully with their students to deliver the content they would normally deliver face-to-face.

- **External experts delivering at our Teaching and Learning Conference**

Actions taken and thoughts on planning: While choosing my external, I looked for experts who have delivered training before that I have enjoyed and learnt from and tapped into their take on this quick shift to learning online. I chose a trainer for our Teaching and Learning Conference who I know uses up-to-date, evidence-based teaching and learning techniques, as well as providing practical applications of techniques in their training for delivery in the classroom.

What I learnt: The result was a session which provided the theory that backs up effective practice in an online classroom. The session, interestingly, was delivered using synchronous and asynchronous delivery methods. A video was played to share the expert's information, followed by an asynchronous task set, then a synchronous gathering of deliverer and delegates to consolidate the learning which had taken place. Seeing their shift in delivery in action was almost as beneficial as the content itself. It gave me the opportunity to consider how the students feel in this new shift from personal experience and use this to reflect on my own teaching methods.

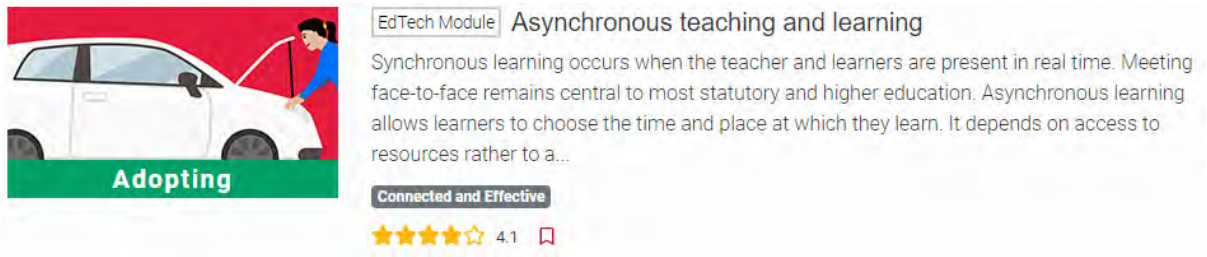
- **Training from learning technologists**

Actions taken and thoughts on planning: I had interactions with two learning technologists. One in-house and one external. A really fantastic learning technologist may not be a trained teacher (although a lot of them are), but they know what technologies are available for learning and how we can use them effectively in our classrooms without shoe-horning in the technology. As they may not be teachers themselves, the training can sometimes be in the form of a lecture, but bear with it, as they really do hold the information we need. It is worth noting here that there is a distinct difference between your IT team, who provide support with IT tools and a learning technologist, who has detailed knowledge of how to use those tools in order to improve teaching and learning experiences.

What I learnt: Learning technologists in-house will know what functions your platforms and virtual learning environments (VLEs) have, so it is best to tap into their knowledge if you have that available. If working with learning technologists outside of your provider, they may talk about functions you do not have access to, so just be aware of this to avoid frustrations later on. However, they will have a wealth of knowledge regarding the different ways you can use your VLE and the ways that other departments in your provider and other providers are using digital skills in teaching and learning. If you can get support on tap from one of these professionals – even better.

- **Education and Training Foundation resources**

Actions taken and thoughts on planning: There is an overwhelming selection of webinars and training videos out there, so I started somewhere familiar. The Education and Training Foundation's Enhanced Digital Learning Platform has short modules which are accessible, and the title gives a clear indication of the content. The sessions I chose to engage in included: Asynchronous teaching and learning, Managing student progress and performance and finally, Supporting students online.



What I learnt: Although initially I felt there could have been more detail in each module, on reflection, it was during the completion of these modules that the distinction and relationship between synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning methods became completely clear to me. The simplicity of the modules allows for an in-depth understanding of a small part of teaching and learning theory at any one time, which during my research, I found to be very useful.

To conclude: What really effective teaching and learning online looks like

The research and professional development I have engaged in as part of my professional formation has absolutely led to one clear conclusion. Effective teaching online is not synchronous or asynchronous, but a well-planned blend of the two. Delivering work synchronously at all times does not allow students time to think, can cause cognitive overload and causes burnout for teachers who are constantly on screen. Entirely asynchronous teaching means that students miss out on differentiation, personal development, individualised input and social interactions.

Sessions should include everything an outstanding face-to-face session includes. A variety of activities, assessment, feedback, individual and group work, measuring of progress, checking of understanding, differentiation, British Values, Equality and Diversity, the lot! We can't dissolve the screen, but by applying the knowledge outlined above we can remove the screen as a barrier to learning. We must realise the importance of ensuring that we consider all of our objectives as a teacher online, as we would as a teacher in a classroom. There is no overhaul here, just an adaptation of what we know well and an opportunity to deliver exceptional learning experiences through the effective use of learning technology.

Lockdown and beyond

Becky Day

Becky is a lecturer at HSDC where she teaches Functional Skills, English and GCSE. She is Subject Lead in Apprentices' Functional Skills and a lecturer in Award in Education and Training (formerly known as PTLLS - Preparation to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector).

Introduction

You would think that I would have been all prepared and lined up, ready to go with my 'all singing, all dancing' online lessons for the third wave of lockdown that was thrust upon the teaching world in January 2021. Think again.

Following the government's lockdown announcement on the 4th January, I was thrown into the tumult of scrabbling together online resources, uploading Google classrooms, and contacting students via email and last minute.com. Then there were Google Meets with staff members while we tried to navigate this looming stretch of virtual teaching. You could almost audibly hear the groans crying out from all the teaching staff across the nation, 'not again'.

Looking back on the last few lessons before our breakup for Christmas, my students were not their usual excited, overconfident selves, scrambling over each other in a bid to leave the lesson and 'getting the hell outta here' for Christmas. They lingered around at the end of the lesson, they were not exuberant about being on their own over Christmas, and they missed the company of their friends - they wanted to just talk. I was genuinely concerned about them. One learner said to me:

> I'm not looking forward to Christmas, it doesn't feel like a holiday, there's nothing to do, none of my friends to see, it's just boring. I would rather be in college.

Then the axe fell. No more face-to-face delivery and online lessons resumed.

Reboot

So, the first few weeks in January I was trying to awake my students from the hibernation slumber they had succumbed to. It was too easy for them to hide away in their rooms, to turn off notifications, to forget they were ever on a course at all!

Fortunately for me, our college has a texting system that allows lecturers to send class texts notifications (you can see me now, rubbing my hands sadistically with glee – you can't hide from me). One thing I know is that most students are glued to their phones and that my message would reach the desired target.

Gradually, attendance increased with each online lesson. Yes! Even my neighbour's attempt to sabotage my teaching by deciding to have building work done during my

live deliveries did not deter me. Whilst the drilling vibrated the walls around me and their loud radio blasted out Billy Idol, I just borrowed one of children's gaming headphones and manged to not only pull out a top-class lesson but gained the respect of my classes with such awesome head gear!

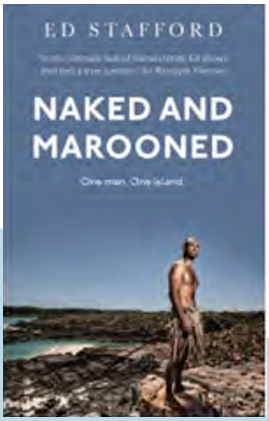
Unlike a classroom, you cannot control the atmosphere and distractions, neither can you see whether students are actually listening and learning. They could be doing anything whilst you are teaching – I have had learners still in bed, some on Portsdown Hill, others walking their dogs and one was buying a hamster from a pet shop. Crazy!

Engagement

I learnt very quickly it was all about engagement from the beginning. It was about making the lesson fun, interactive and making the learners do the work. My aim was - it didn't matter what they were doing, they had to be involved, they wanted to be involved and they wanted to return to their next lesson. I was not going to have a lesson with me just droning on, showing a few PowerPoint slides to a bunch of 'letters' representing students who didn't interact and who had effectively gone to sleep. This was **not** happening**, not** on my watch**, not** in my lessons.

Therefore, I set about using interactive and competitive games to start the lessons (after our initial 'how are you?' chats to make them feel comfortable and looking after their welfare). These games varied from 'zoom in' YouTube videos, where they had to write in the comments box what they thought the item was – first to guess wins a point. This was used as a learning aim of 'zooming' in on their writing, to proofread their text and mark off against the examination check list. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WA4Lf2Q8fNw) The students loved it. I used good old Jamboard for collaborative ideas, which they enjoyed as well – and expect the 'inappropriate picture' they just can't help themselves, and of course Kahoot and PowerPoint games too.

I found topics that were interesting and relevant, with strong comparisons with their lockdown situation and that they had already show a keen interest for, such as the book and TV series called 'Naked and Marooned' by Ed Stafford. I based the lessons around this notorious adventurer who had written a book about his 60-day survival stint on an uninhabited tropical island of Olorua, in the Pacific Ocean. I set a survival task about being lost at sea to start the lesson, where they had to rank items they had salvaged from their wreck. The students loved this and many of the disengaged unformed service students took a leading role in this activity. This then led to the book review about how Ed Stafford survived with no clothes, no tools and no food. We discussed the comparisons with our own lockdown and the effect being lonely would have on mental health. The learners really appreciated and opened up about their own experiences and one stated:



> I can see from Ed Stafford's experience, that it is important to have a routine, even when it's so tempting to just stay in bed all day – that is what kept him going and kept him mentally positive.

The students answered quiz questions on Google forms about the book review, they looked collaboratively at descriptive words used. We then used Mentimeter to write down at least five descriptive words that they would use to describe their surroundings if they were on a tropical island – this was then formed into a word cloud. You do have to be careful that the learners do not use any swear words when doing this, as I found out to my surprise in earlier lessons!

The final task for this topic was writing a message in a bottle. I had used the exam writing paper spec and adapted the question style so that they had practice in answering an exam question but doing it on desperately seeking help in their message in a bottle. After watching a clip from the series (you need to share the link in messages rather than share on your screen as it is very glitchy), this inspired the learners to write their exam answers and the results were incredible. The students' writing was fabulous – very creative and imaginative pieces of writing - the best to date. One of my learners stated:

'That was one of the most enjoyable lessons and pieces of work I have done to date, thank you. I loved it!'

All that effort of pouring my heart and soul into creating these engaging lessons had paid off – and it may feel like a drop in the ocean, but believe me – as L'Oréal would say, 'you're worth it'.

And then of course, you have the whole camera issue – I mean, who likes to teach to a bunch of memes, letters and blank screens? Not I (said the fly). With this in in mind, I just asked during one lesson about what pets everyone had, and would they mind showing me? And wham, it was like Piccadilly Circus at Christmas - all the cameras and lights came on and dogs, cats, snakes, budgerigars and hamsters appeared, confidence rose, and students became a little more used to their cameras being turned on – though instead of me teaching to a row of letters, I was then teaching to a menagerie

of animals! It was a little chaotic, but worth the slight interruption and helped unite the group and warm the atmosphere, which in turn helped with engagement and retention.

Feedback

I've asked students about their opinions regarding online learning and the majority I would say, are rather negative. The main view is that it is boring, it is harder to concentrate and remain engaged. They have found it hard to remain connected, inspired and motivated. Can you blame them? They are surrounded by millions of distractions that the teacher has no control over, they are using two of their five senses to learn and we wonder why they cannot remember anything we have taught them. One student said to me:

> It's really hard to concentrate for so long and take in all the knowledge, it's really intense. Also, in class I wouldn't have my phone distracting me so much!

Surprisingly, there have been a few learners that have excelled in these new lockdown parameters. These are students who have suffered from severe anxiety and have really enjoyed the more distant interaction with both teachers and class. They have accomplished far better results from online work and have actively enjoyed online classes. To them, online learning has brought lessons to their lonely bedroom where they have felt trapped and unable to attend college. A learner, who suffers with severe anxiety, confided in me:

> I prefer online lessons as it helps with my mental health and I don't get so anxious going into a classroom. I do miss my friends, though I don't miss the long bus ride into college. I hadn't realised how sleep deprived I was, lockdown has helped me catch up on rest and my mental health has improve because of it.

Therefore, we can see that it is not all doom and gloom surrounding online learning, and like with everything in this world, it is what **you** make it. I have rather enjoyed teaching online, I believe it is no substitute for face-to-face delivery, though in a classroom you do not have the option of being able to mute very vocal and rude students – or even delete them!

Conclusion

Moving forward, once teaching moves back into the 3D world, I will be proposing to my manager to continue the online delivery mode alongside face-to-face classroom teaching to accommodate learners who cannot make classes. I will be creating lessons that suit both face-to-face delivery and online teaching, being aware of both outlets and seeing that this may become the new 'norm' for teaching.

Get Connected

Kathie Orr

Kathie is a tutor and resource worker at Bray Adult Learning Centre (BALC), part of Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board's (KWETB) Adult Basic Education Service where she teaches literacy, numeracy and digital skills to literacy and language learners. Her special areas of interest are integrating numeracy, and digital literacy. Kathie is also part of the Marking Progress project team (https://www.nala.ie/marking-progress/)with the National adult Learning Agency (NALA) guiding the numeracy element of the project. Kathie can be contacted at kathrynorr@kwetb.ie

Introduction

Get Connected is a user-friendly, digital teaching and learning resource, designed to support adult educators to use the flipped learning approach with basic skills learners who are developing digital skills. It is an output of the Erasmus+ KA 2 FLIP IDEAL project (https://www.flipideal.org/).

Why was it created?

Get Connected was designed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, to support adult learners to upskill in order to be more equipped to participate in a changed world and learning environment. The target learners are adults taking their first steps back to education, who may have few digital skills.

What does it comprise?

Get Connected has two parts.

1. A flipped online resource, divided into bite-sized learning units covering the following topics:

- Tools for Learning – using the mobile phone
- Tools for Learning – learning in a virtual classroom
- Keeping in touch – sending messages
- Looking for information – searching the internet
- Keeping safe online.

2. Printable tutor notes with sample class outlines and ideas for active teaching and learning activities for face-to-face or virtual class time.

Why is it suitable for basic skills learners?

- **Highly user-friendly**. No login or password is required. The open link to the online resource can be sent to learners by message or email. The whole course can be accessed via this one link. No downloading or navigating between links is required.
- **Works on all devices**. The only device which many of our learners have access to for learning is a mobile phone. The online content has good functionality on phones, tablets, laptops, and PCs.
- **Accessible.** Plain English text tailored for basic skills learners and there is a version with a voiceover to support learners with literacy issues.
- **Interactive.** Integrated self-marking quiz activities. These encourage creative repetition to embed learning and enable learners to assess their own progress and develop independent learning strategies.

What has the response been?

We are currently using *Get Connected* as an induction resource at two of our centres, ensuring that learners have the digital skills they need to undertake their course modules in an online or blended learning environment.

Teacher feedback is that *Get Connected* is a very useful and adaptable resource. They can use the materials in a face-to-face setting or online classes and can supplement it with their own resources. Its flipped learning approach is perfect in the current environment where class time is more limited; learners enjoy being able to find a quiet time in their day to work through the course content independently on their own device and review it as often as they want. This frees up face-to-face or online class time for more active learning activities.

The demand for, and relevance of, such a flipped resource, specifically tailored for basic skills learners, has been evidenced by the fact that since we rolled out the resource in September 2020 to the date of writing (15th January 2021) there have been 1,541 unique views of the voiceover version of the resource and 620 unique views of the text-only version.

Learner story: Martin

Martin started at the centre in September 2020. Part of his tailored learning goals for the *Get Connected* course were to gain more independence in his reading and writing. He had never sent a text message before. He is now using the microphone speech to

text feature on his phone to dictate text messages. He then reads them over to check them and sends them off. His friends and family are very surprised to be receiving messages! The initiative supported Martin to use a scanning app on his phone to read out printed text. As a result, he can now follow a recipe which is something he always wanted to do. He has bought a wok and two recipe books and is following recipes to cook for his family.

Click here for the online resource

Click here for the tutor notes

‘Connecting in Covid’*: co-creating a virtual literacy/wellbeing course with mothers seeking asylum in Birmingham*

Mary-Rose Puttick and Fehmida Norat-Gilchrist

Mary-Rose’s practice-based background is in adult and community education in which she taught ESOL and Family Literacy (for parents with EAL) in Manchester. On moving to Birmingham to start her doctorate at Birmingham City University, she started volunteering at two refugee third sector organisations and is now a voluntary asylum guide at one of the organisations. Mary-Rose is currently a Research Assistant at Birmingham City University.

Prior to working in the third sector Fehmida taught and led English at a variety of secondary mainstream settings, including SEND. She has been a voluntary education mentor for refugee young adults and currently manages and delivers ‘essential skills’ including ESOL/ English at a homelessness charity. Fehmida is also co-founder of Literacy100: an organisation working to address additional literacy needs experienced by homeless individuals.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it many distinct issues for women who are seeking asylum in the UK. The situation is particularly challenging for single mothers who are unable to access essential information regarding health and wellbeing services due to language barriers, social isolation, and problems arising from their migration status which entails living in temporary accommodation. Many single mothers seeking asylum supported by the homeless sector have also experienced trafficking and domestic violence. In this pilot project we, a university research assistant and a literacy coordinator in a homeless charity, aimed to address some of the barriers in health communication that a group of single mothers with English as an Additional Language (EAL) going through the asylum process were facing as a result of Covid-19 by co-designing and co-delivering a short online course for mothers with health and wellbeing as the main focus. The mothers were under the support of a local homelessness charity in the West Midlands. Our pilot, which took place over six weeks from May to June 2020, centred on a virtual learning platform formed of a women’s-only Zoom and WhatsApp support group with a combined literacy and practical wellbeing focus. The project looks to the future of a post-Covid world in which a blended approach of virtual and face-to-face learning is likely. Educational provision provided by the homelessness sector is bespoke in nature, taking an individualised approach to learning. Therefore, we hoped that this small-scale teaching and learning project would open up opportunities for peer support for potentially isolated women in a small virtual safe space which was not there before: something that ultimately could have a positive impact upon overall wellbeing.

Context

People seeking asylum who are waiting for a decision on their claim have 'no recourse to public funds' due to their status, as defined in Section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (Homeless Link, 2020). For the year ending September 2020, 76% of people seeking asylum in the UK were waiting for more than six months for an initial decision on their case, a figure that was the culmination of the impact of Covid-19 as well as a backlog from before the pandemic (Refugee Council, 2020). During the lengthy wait on their case decisions, those seeking asylum live on £5.66 per day (Refugee Council, 2020a). Member of Parliament Preet Kaur Gill, along with Refugee Action and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) last year wrote to the UK Secretary of State to raise awareness of the heightened challenges that this economic situation, alongside lengthy waits on decision-making, brings to individuals during the lockdown situation of Covid-19 (Refugee Council, 2020b).

Allsop et al.'s (2014) evidence and policy review of poverty issues facing refugees and those seeking asylum in the UK suggests that individuals who are in the asylum process do not access the support to which they are entitled. Drawing on evidence from Refugee Action (2006), their report suggests that this is due to such factors as fear of being deported or in facing ongoing persecution. People seeking asylum also face complex health challenges, such as: difficulties in accessing information due to language barriers; a lack of knowledge about their rights to access NHS care; and unique health challenges, particularly in maternity care, mental health needs, and poorly controlled chronic conditions (Nylander, 2019). Additional challenges raised in the literature for those seeking asylum include access to learning, connected to their temporary living circumstances, aspects which are currently heightened due to the temporary closure of many third sector organisations. A report by Crisis charity highlighted specific learning needs and barriers arising from the multiple needs of individuals facing different levels of destitution, including: anxiety arising from poor self-esteem; negative attitudes due to past educational experiences; a lack of peer support; and fears based on abilities for social interaction (Luby & Welch, 2005).

Project summary

The mothers

The eight mothers were all living in various forms of temporary accommodation across Birmingham and had children aged from 4 to 14. Their main literacy need was ESOL (English as a Second Language) with first languages including French and Kurdish. The women had high levels of digital literacy skills and some educational experiences in their first language but were isolated from the ability to learn English in the UK due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Being asylum seekers with recent 'leave to remain' status, the women were also previously unable to access formal English classes, which potentially impacted upon the ease at which they could access health and wellbeing support: their only option would have been taught classes in the voluntary/third sector, provisional

upon whether the classes accepted children in attendance. Gaining recent leave to remain meant that the women had to begin to engage with the welfare system as well as continue to support their children's access to mainstream education. They also have little control over where they will be housed so require an understanding of how to access services and everyday activities such as shopping and travel.

Prior to the creation of this class, the charity surveyed female users of their service who all reported high levels of loneliness and a desire to form support networks away from the charity in order to support a sustained end to their homelessness. The impact of lockdown on language learning had also been highlighted as the move to online or telephone services had meant that individuals with EAL were unable to have opportunities to practice or learn English. Some female users had also reported experiences of discrimination based on their accent or ability to understand things over the phone.

The women were referred to the course through their 'lead worker': an overarching support worker for the individual enabling their progression plan out of homelessness. The lead workers completed a standard English and digital skills audit designed for new referrals to the service during lockdown. This helped to identify the women most in need who would benefit from engaging with a small support group. The women had a level of English at ESOL 'pre-entry' level and despite having significant previous experience of trauma were all extremely keen to engage with learning whenever and however they could. This audit also ensured that the women were supported to access the Internet in any way needed to ensure that they could attend. Some of the women received donated equipment and/or data top-ups.

Our virtual literacy/wellbeing intervention

When setting up the sessions we took advantage of the digital literacy skills of the women and created accessible, picture-based information images in their first language. The sessions were created as stand-alone weekly blocks to best enable accessibility. Each week was focused around a practical and useful theme, for example, 'Speaking to the Doctor'. Fehmida delivered a short 30-minute interactive online Zoom session with visual and first language learning support materials. This was then followed by a 20-minute wellbeing session by Mary-Rose linked to the lesson content. Below, we propose three of the ways our literacy/wellbeing intervention supports practice.

Informing voluntary teaching practice

It is typical for attendance to be low when a new class is created as individuals often have numerous other appointments to attend. The mothers attending this class also had the additional challenge of being in lockdown with their children and trying to

support their children's learning in a second language. We therefore decided to use the charity's WhatsApp account as an additional teaching and learning tool to send the images to the women privately ahead of the sessions and subsequently to follow up messages with a phone-call to ensure that the mothers were comfortable with the idea behind the sessions and to ensure attendance. The charity has a bank of volunteers and actively seeks new ways to involve them: enabling a volunteer to be attached to our project. This volunteer had previous experience of supporting female ESOL learners. The volunteer was given a mobile phone to enable her to check in with attendees to the class and to provide extra study support.

Fehmida devised differentiated questions for each mother based on their work within the class and sent them to the volunteer. The volunteer would ring the women two days after the class to ask the questions and give them an invaluable opportunity to practise the language that they had learnt and to discuss the wellbeing tip(s) that they had experienced and if they were putting them into practice. This additional contact from the volunteer in the weeks between classes provided additional opportunities to check in on the mothers' wellbeing and to support provide encouragement and motivation for attending the classes. Differentiated questions are simply good questioning strategies that any teacher would utilise in the classroom but when they are passed on to a volunteer it supports a differentiated and individualised conversation outside the classroom between the language volunteer and the learner and also supports the volunteer in a mentoring capacity. Having the volunteer to supplement learning also gives the learner further opportunity to practise without the pressure of it being their teacher and further widens their network and real-world practice.

The National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA) has produced a good practice framework for ESOL voluntary teaching in which they distinguish four main dimensions of the language volunteer's role: 'assisting in the class'; 'practising language use'; 'providing opportunities for social engagement' and 'promoting and encouraging language improvement' (NATECLA, 2016: 2). We propose that our approach supported the volunteer in all these elements and added a fifth dimension to the framework in terms of 'motivational support outside the classroom'.

Shaping digital teaching and learning

The digital literacy abilities of individuals should not be underestimated and in a post-lockdown world is something that should continue to be embraced. Digital learning across a range of mediums provides accessibility and inclusion for all. Between classes, Fehmida also posted additional questions and relevant information and learning points in the WhatsApp group and always greeted the mothers in the mornings. This encouraged the mothers to speak to each other in the WhatsApp group in English and they began to form friendships and support one another in their target language. They

were forming a social network outside of their immediate circle: building a resilience for whatever may come next in their housing journey and building confidence with using English.

Simpson and Cooke (2017: 2) critique the dominance of English in the ESOL classroom and argue that to understand multilingualism amongst ESOL speakers in a superdiverse world requires recognition of 'languages as fluid, dynamic and socially constructed semiotic systems … one which privileges its status as social practice rather than as a normative linguistic system.' Our pilot project has shown that we need to view online/digital learning as more than a static one-way Zoom lesson. A physical presence does not have to be the only way to build and encourage networks, demonstrated through our use of WhatsApp and the volunteer's phone calls. We believe our approach demonstrates multimodal learning in the real world.

Although Fehmida spent additional time differentiating the questions and connecting with the learners on WhatsApp it did not add to the workload because 'homework' was not activated in the traditional sense of a 'one-size fits all' worksheet, but rather was dynamic with the ability to provide instant feedback in a variety of mediums including voice notes. Teachers are potentially able to share resources through mobile phones, depending on the organisation they work for, and we found that if you have learners who do have some digital literacy skills, regardless of the language they speak they will be able to use apps and tools to interact and access the resources, saving on the extra time taken to edit out-of-date resources.

Shaping a holistic approach to teaching and learning

The wellbeing sessions included different elements each week including simple yoga exercises that could be done from a sitting or standing posture, breathing exercises and, for the final session, a face massage using acupressure points. In the final session, Fehmida posted a special relaxing aromatherapy oil to each of the women and Mary-Rose showed them where they could put this on their pulse points such as wrists and neck to support their relaxation. We also incorporated into our planning ample time at the start and end of sessions for the mothers to share how they were feeling and to ask any questions, highlighting our belief in the importance of recognising the connections between physical and mental wellbeing to support cognitive learning. Our holistic approach was informed by the work of bell hooks who speaks of her Freirean approach to teaching and the way she has extended beyond solely a concern with the mind, into a way of thinking about pedagogy that emphasises 'wholeness, a union of mind, body, and spirit' (1994: 14), influenced to a large extent by the Vietnamese spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh. hooks (1994) discusses her approach as 'engaged pedagogy' that emphasises wellbeing on the part of both teachers and students.

We concur with hook's premise and, indeed, believe that engaged pedagogy is a necessity when working with students from refugee and newly arrived migration

contexts. Our combined approach to the content provided real world relevance to learning that we know is important, but it also importantly added a holistic aspect that foregrounded that the mothers were valued as individuals and that we cared about their wellbeing. We were not just imparting knowledge; we were supporting them on their own individual journey. A growth mindset approach to learning is transformative but when the learner is experiencing or has experienced trauma and/or significant challenges we need to nurture a growth mindset approach to the individual as a whole and not just to the learning objectives.

Conclusion

Digital peer learning platforms that encourage interaction alongside learning means that there is an element of positive peer-pressure to encourage learners to 'show up and be counted'. It also means that individuals are more open to supporting, and asking for help from, one another. This helps to alleviate unconscious pressures that learning may have for individuals and breaks down traditional hierarchies of power in teaching and learning environments. We created a bespoke approach specifically for this group of mothers in this particular circumstance of the pandemic lockdown. Tailoring the content, embracing first languages and personal experiences also help to enable the lesson content to be diverse and using the digital platform to remind them to also look after their wellbeing between classes is of utmost importance. We want learners to become critical and confident contributors to society; in response, we need holistic, diverse curriculum approaches that centre the voices of politically marginalised communities. In conclusion, we finish with the following words from hooks (1989), who calls for acknowledgement of the power of the teacher in feminist classrooms: a power which does not need to be utilised in ways that diminish, but rather to enrich:

> We must learn from one another, sharing ideas and pedagogical strategies. If we are to learn from one another, if we are able to develop a concrete strategy for radicalizing our classrooms, we must be more engaged as a group. We must be willing to deconstruct this power dimension, to challenge, change, and create new approaches. We must be willing to restore the spirit of risk – to be fast, wild, to be able to take hold, turn around, transform (hooks, 1989: 52).

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A recipe for building community @online CPD events

Chloë Hynes

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This time 12 months ago we (CCC) were preparing for one of our National Development days as part of the Shaping Success programme delivered on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). The event was on Tuesday 17th March 2020. This is a date that will always stick in my mind because the Friday before was the COBRA meeting that led to our first national lockdown on Thursday 19th (COBRA refers to the emergency council which is formed when a crisis arises which will call for various different UK departments to work in tandem). As a team we met after the COBRA team did and we decided to move the event online (one and a half working days before the event!). We had never done a whole day event 100% online before but we could not cancel it – especially considering the emotions that were beginning to brew in the Further Education (FE) sector at the time. We pride ourselves on our events being collaborative spaces that echo the needs of the FE community in all of its guises (college, community learning and prison education to name a few). We have accessible venues, great food, and lots of time for networking and collaboration with peers. How could we achieve that online - and by Zoom (our web conferencing platform of choice)? We'd delivered many webinars and online courses before but nothing on this scale. We are not ones to be discouraged by a challenge, so the team scrambled to completely rejig everything we had planned, including recruiting different trainers as some (at the time) did not feel comfortable teaching online. The event was a success. However, the continuous professional development (CPD) we put on last week, which was a very similar event, evidences how far we have come on our journey to building thoughtful, engaging and purposeful CPD events.

Back in spring 2020, we did not know that development day would set a precedent for all the many online events that followed. At the time, we did not know and could not have predicted the digital supernova the FE sector would face in the coming year. Since then, I have been keeping a reflective log of all the events I have been involved in (for CCC, PDN, NATECLA and even the Collaborative Action Research Network), as a small piece of action research that has inspired others to deliver their own CPD in a similar way. Or at the very least – learn from our mistakes and learning curves. If you would like to read the entire reflection, you can access it online here. However, I thought it was important to summarise my findings in a short and accessible piece. Therefore, I would like to use a metaphor of a recipe; a recipe that I have developed with the

different teams I have worked with, for building community at online CPD events. I have heard people compare teaching and learning to other vocations including gardening and dancing, but this metaphor with a chef (teacher), kitchen (learning space) and recipe (pedagogy) resonates with me in particular. And, as with any recipe, you are welcome to 'pinch and personalise' it to your heart's content. You might disagree with how I have approached a particular ingredient or have your own preferences, but I hope it gives you a little food for thought to empower you to put on your own events.

100g Rhythm

Like any lesson or session, there needs to be a good rhythm that reduces teacher talk and **allows for breathing space, reflection and general wellbeing**. This is heightened when online by the very nature of it being focussed on one physical space: your device. My research showed practitioners (including teachers, learning support workers and others supporting learning in FE) liked a good rhythm that modelled the same practices we were advocating, with elements of interactivity (via quizzing, whiteboards, chat, etc.), time for reflection away from the screen and space for practitioners to hear different voices in regular breakout rooms.

When considering the event as a whole, however, there seemed to be a thin line between a good rhythm, a disjointed melody and relentless pace. Practitioners fed back on the need for more breaks, specifically during the sessions where one person spoke for a long time with little interactivity to chunk it up. During these occasions, I don't think there was a need for a break as such, but **a change in activity.** From personal experience of an unintentional pacey rhythm: **slow down, breathe**, and as anyone who has ever facilitated a breakout room will tell you: time moves at a different speed online!

10L Giving it a go + 50mls Trial and Tested

We trialled FlipGrid introductions, a separate café room for informal chat during an event, and a Padlet for collaboration afterwards. These approaches to community building worked with varying degrees depending on the attendees and the time they had to dedicate to the CPD. However, the mainstay approaches included having **purposeful breakout room tasks** throughout the event with a timer. The timer is important because it enabled the groups to take responsibility for the time in their room and work together to ensure everyone's voice was heard.

Next is giving practitioners **time to play with any new digital tools** in a safe space with others who can help if needed and invite discussion about how they can be used in teaching, learning and assessment (TLA). This adds a richer layer to a session that simply recommends a digital tool, if practitioners can give it a go themselves and begin the critical thinking process that places it in their subject practice with pedagogy at the forefront.

Finally, as I mentioned in my introduction, we had trainers who did not feel confident teaching online despite having many years of face-to-face training experience in all areas of the sector. On the other hand, there were trainers like myself, whose confidence had soared since moving online. I desperately wanted to **encourage and empower the trainers** who had been doing the same for me since I started working for CCC. I was also increasingly concerned about their wellbeing – they all care so much for the practitioners they support, but who is caring for them? So, the project lead and I set up **fortnightly online staffrooms** which provided a wellbeing check-in inspired by Nancy Kline's Thinking Environments, a digital teach-meet to share practice with one another, and a breakout room 'sandpit' to try it out. A colleague had introduced me to this metaphor of a 'sandpit': playtime to become confident with a digital tool, in a safe space with peers.

40g Thinking outside the box

An acronym, platform, approach or term may be used frequently in your circles, department or organisation but it **may be new or unfamiliar to others**. Some practitioners will tell you in chat (or vocally) that they do not understand something, but many will not. I am guilty of this overfamiliarity myself sometimes. I have found that working with a close team who can catch words and expand them in chat or add a link and brief description of a platform, can add a dynamism to your delivery. Near the end of the year, we discussed whether my (optional) **Zoom orientation** during the 15mins before our start time was still necessary. However, many practitioners have not been using Zoom regularly (or at all) this past year so we cannot make assumptions about their confidence with the platform. Therefore, the Zoom orientation is a mainstay in the events as it is a good opportunity to not only introduce the event space (without a slide taking over attendees' screens) but also briefly explain our interaction 'rules' (reactions, chat, cameras, renaming, etc.) and generally set the tone of the day as one that is warm and welcoming. It is pertinent to note that we have never used the 'webinar' function of Zoom but instead use 'meetings', which we do not record. Recording often stifles openness and dialogue. From my experience as an attendee of events using the webinars format, it is very difficult to garner the same level of community feel without functions such as gallery view, reactions and breakout rooms.

In addition to the Zoom orientation, I found that **relating things to real life** scenarios helped to visualise and bring to life particular activities. For example, we use a Wakelet collection (click here for a template you can copy) for our 'conference pack' including sign-in desk, exhibition space, abstracts and interactive agenda. Later I also began describing the purpose and importance (for safeguarding and networking) of renaming yourself when you leave one Zoom room and enter another as 'remembering to put your ID badge back on'. I have felt such panic in the sector when moving teaching and learning online and I have learned that we do not need to scrap everything and start again. I am particularly motivated by the fact that we managed to make the Ruth Hayman Trust quiz (a significant part of the NATECLA national conference) a reality, albeit with some rejigging and a few rehearsals!

350mls Trust

Whilst it is important to have specific roles in any big event to ensure it is a well-oiled machine, I have found that the most successful online CPD was when **practitioners confidently shared ideas with one another and were comfortable enough to interrupt** if needed. At a recent event, after the orientation and introduction, a practitioner commented in chat: 'you all seem a lovely team who respect, trust and value each other.' In truth, I have never felt more at home than I have with the practitioners I work with on a day-to-day basis, so this observation was accurate. However, it hit me that a practitioner might only see this 30 minutes into an event. I believe it is because we all play a particular role in our events, that is as important as any other. There is no hierarchy as such and we are not afraid to try something new, potentially make a mistake or wear a silly hat for the purpose of making the attendees laugh!

There are two particular roles that you may not employ in your own online events, but we have found incredibly useful: the **co-pilot and the rapporteur**. Each of our rooms has a co-pilot as well as main presenters. This co-pilot is vital in the smooth running of the events as they can deal with any technical requirements (polls, breakout rooms, etc.), collate any questions in chat, add relevant links as and when needed and bring up the slides if the presenter has internet issues. The co-pilots are introduced at the beginning of the event so that practitioners know who they are (with organisation nominals or 'Happy to help!' in their screenname) and can 'direct message' them if needed. The rapporteur acts as a needle weaving in and out of the different sessions, collecting all the golden threads in order to curate a post-event conference programme. This means that we do not have to send multiple long, unwieldy chat transcripts to attendees and, if the rapporteur shares their findings in the plenary, it can make it a much more meaningful and personalised close to the day.

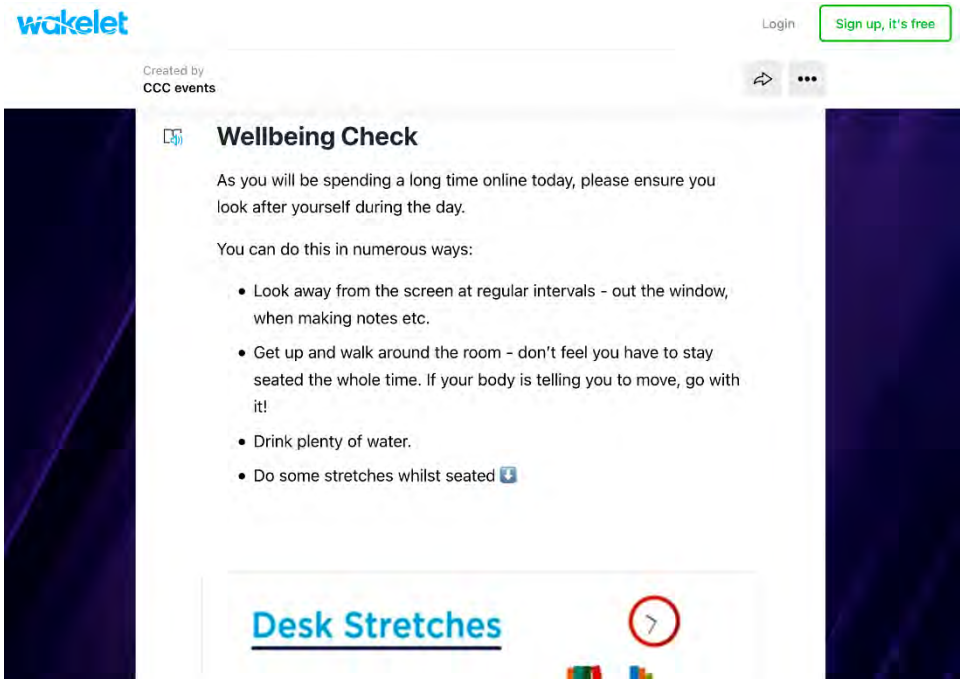
50g Dialogue + 400g Reflective Practice

We experimented with numerous ways to encourage collaboration and dialogue. We encouraged practitioners to make **collaborative notes** in chat detailing their takeaways and thoughts during the session. Many practitioners were then comfortable to ask questions to confirm terminology or ideas etc. However, this worked better in smaller groups or sessions where the presenter was not asking people to do specific activities in chat (which disrupted the flow of the collaborative notes). In larger groups we utilised the rhythm of the day by **interspersing it with meaningful breakouts**, two of which could be reflective group activities at the beginning and end (we trialled pairs but in big groups this did not work technically due to drop-outs in the breakout rooms). This worked best if you could ensure the same people were in both activities, so the practitioners were able to build a relationship with these peers during the course of the day. After each event I supported, our feedback included comments about how much they valued the time we allowed for practitioners to talk and reflect with their peers.

2tsp Time

A CPD all-day event can be tiring. I have not yet found the perfect number of breaks to length of break ratio and I believe that is because it is extremely subjective. At some events, we had both positive and negative comments about the length of sessions and number of breaks.

Near the end of the year, I added another section to the conference pack: a **'wellbeing check'** with ideas to encourage practitioners to be kind to themselves and make their own decisions as to whether they need time away from the screen, switch off their camera, stand up and walk around, etc. However, I found that many practitioners, for whatever reason, needed to be given permission to switch their cameras off, look away for long periods, see their child, or go and do something else when they enter a workshop room a little early. Therefore, as well as the wellbeing check in the conference pack, we also mention it verbally in the introduction and throughout the day.



The only thing I would actively discourage is people trying to work at the same time as attending an all-day event. One piece of feedback that sticks in my mind, was that the pace was 'so relentless [they] couldn't get any work done'. As trainers, we hope our CPD will be time and space away from work to focus on a particular area of development, but unfortunately, I've found this not always to be the case. As such we **start a little later and finish early** to give practitioners time to follow up emails before and after the event, if necessary.

2tsp #FEtapestry

Something really exciting happened between a couple of the events where threads started to form between them (e.g. #FEforestschool) and as facilitators, we were able to **encourage practitioners to share their ideas, nurture them and amplify their voices** by giving them a platform through which to inspire other practitioners. As facilitators, we can help recognise inspiring voices and shine a light on them (especially the quiet ones), **providing stepping-stones and opportunities** where possible.

At our most recent CCC events we have been keen to allow practitioners to share with each other in breakouts, to have silent time on their own to reflect, to have a chance to take part in more traditional 'training' by our Shaping Success trainers and also to hear from practitioners who have tried these approaches in learning spaces of their own. We were keen to **expand the idea of who is an 'expert' in FE** and lay bare the tapestry that pulls us all together as a community that can learn from one another.

Trails and Tales: Mobile Literacies – Walking and Talking in Blackburn and Darwen

Claire Lapington

Claire has worked with adults and young people for 25 years, supporting their language and literacy development, including teaching in prisons, rehabilitation centres, schools and colleges, many community centres and village halls and on a converted bus. She currently works as a specialist teacher and assessor in the Additional Learning Support Department of a large Further Education college in Lancashire. Her research interests centre on everyday literacy practices and how they can be utilised to support learning.

In the past year, as our recreational and leisure options have decreased, walking in the local environment has played an increasingly significant role in people's everyday lives. As my life changed due to Covid-19 my social contact became increasingly centred on meeting family and friends outside, and walking. I have walked footpaths and lanes local to my house that I previously did not know existed and enjoyed being able to cross the usually busy bypass to access countryside beyond. During these walking meetups we talk, recount our experiences of living in lockdown, share news about mutual friends and try to make sense of the developing national picture and what it will mean for us in the months to come. These walks have become a vital tool in developing an understanding of how to live during a global pandemic. The significant function these walks have played in my life at this time mirrored conclusions I had drawn four years previously when studying the impact of walking in company from a literacy and language perspective.

Four years ago, I also spent the spring, summer and autumn walking. This time I was conducting research for an Ed.D thesis. The focus of my study was to consider how participation in group-led council-run Health Walks effected change in individuals. I was particularly interested in changes that were not primarily health related and the role that literacy and language use played in these. I drew on Department of Health studies (Walking Works 2014, 2015a, 2015 b) of the Health Walk national initiative that described participants' perceived cultural and social benefits. These included changes in mood and sense of self, improved social relations, development of knowledge of and changed relationship with the local area and increased involvement in community activities.

I was interested in the mechanisms by which these benefits arose and my conjecture was that literacy and language played a part in these. Whereas I drew my understanding of the outcomes of Health Walks initiatives from Department of Health evaluations, my assumptions about language use as a key element of the process were more instinctual. It was emboldened by noticing that in talking to participants they

often mentioned language use as a key element of their experience of taking part in Health Walks.

The aim of my study was to offer policy makers and practitioners an alternative lens through which to view how walkers experience their involvement in Health Walks and new tools by which to measure impact and design further initiatives. In terms of education, I aimed to offer a glimpse of the affordances of walking and the local environment in developing strategies by which to involve learners in meaningful and creative language and literacy learning.

Currently as the government grapples with the enormous challenges presented by the pandemic, I feel my conclusions are pertinent. Funding has been announced to develop walking as a sustainable transport option and Covid-safe means to maintaining health. At the same time, as a society we are beginning to focus on the significant impacts on mental health that lockdown isolation has engendered as well as reimagining how to develop safe educational opportunities for children and adults alike. My understanding of the potentially transformational impacts of what I came to term 'mobile literacies', could potentially address both wellbeing and educational concerns.

In order to explore these ideas, I began walking regularly with two established Health Walk groups run by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. One group was a women-only walk primarily comprised of older women of South Asian heritage who walked from a local community centre to parks and canal towpaths in the area. The other was a mixed group who met weekly in a variety of rural areas local to Darwen town. I walked with these groups for a period of months as a participant observer to try and understand more about the walking experience and its impacts. My process of data collection evolved during my time with these groups. Ultimately, I analysed the transcripts of speech that were recorded on a mobile device attached to my rucksack and set to record as we walked. I gained consent from walkers before recording and walkers read and consented to transcripts being used before they were included for analysis. Pseudonyms have been used for all attributed contributions. Towards the end of the research period the groups met indoors to read speech transcripts, look at ordnance survey maps of the routes linked to the extracts and draw personalised route maps inspired by the memories of the event. (see fig 1)

I approached my research as an education professional with an understanding of literacy as a social practice (Barton and Hamilton, 1998). The study therefore, was rooted in an understanding of literacy as an everyday activity that permeates people's lives and through which power relationships are expressed and sustained. I drew on theorists within the New Literacy Studies (Street, 1993) as well as theories regarding multimodality (Kress, 2010), literacy and the body (Enriquez et al., 2015), literacy and place (Leander and Sheehy, 2004), New Materialism (Bennett, 2012) and Narrative

Studies (Georgakopoulou, 2007; Bamberg, 2007; Langellier and Peterson, 2011) to place and consider literacy at the heart of the walking experience.

My involvement with the Health Walks groups convinced me that the practices that took place were more than walking and talking. The language use was different to chatting and telling stories in a café or even socialising on treadmills in a gym. The language use was generated by forward movement and structured by the environment and route of the walk. Influenced by posthuman exploration of literacy practices (Thiel, 2015) I therefore distinguished this particular form of oral language use as a literacy practice and suggested that walking allowed for particular oral storytelling practices to emerge.

I termed these practices mobile literacies. I examined how mobile literacies emerge in mobility and are shaped by the landscapes through which the walkers move. The centrality of movement as an element of the literacies I explored motivated my coinage of the term 'mobile literacies'. I am aware of other conceptions of mobile literacies centred around the use of mobile phones and other devices (Burnett et al., 2017). As the two sets of practices are so different, I am confident that confusion will not occur. Through the lens of the concept of mobile literacies the complex intertwining of body, mind, language and place that takes place during a walk is magnified and clarified. From this perspective, an alternative understanding of the transformative potential of the walk emerges.

One of my early observations with the Blackburn walking group was that we often walked through streets to access the towpath of the Leeds & Liverpool canal. I began to note that moving from local streets to the different environment of the towpath motivated a change in language use, as if the walk proper began in the less familiar environment of the towpath and at this point the language use I named mobile literacies began. Talk on the streets would be about immediate concerns regarding the walkers and their families and recent events. On arriving at the canal, away from traffic, close to water, plants and birds the talk would become more reflective and expansive. Women would pick blackberries and describe in detail their sensory memories of gardens of their childhood in Pakistan and their experiences of growing, gathering and cooking fruit and vegetables. We observed week by week the growth of a brood of moorhen chicks on the same stretch of the canal which motivated ongoing reminiscences of their children's development and feelings about time, old age and mortality.

Mobile literacies emerge, I assert, through an affective response to the material and sensory conditions of the walk. In developing this concept, I drew on an understanding

of multimodal literacy practices that include bodily movement, gesture and talk and I considered how the affective, emotional response to the sensory and material stimulation of the walk initiates transformational practices.

In aiming to understand how the elements of the walking experience interacted, I was influenced by Bennett's (2010) new materialist perspective, that interactions between matter, including between living and non-living, harness creative potential. She describes 'thing power' as 'the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle' (Bennett, 2012: 3). Bennett ascribes the capacity for agency to both humans and objects and in so doing opens up a vista where each has the potential to co-construct and transform each other. Bennett describes interactions that are meaning-making and can be read therefore potentially as multimodal, materialist literacy events.

This line of thought is pursued by Thiel (2015) in an ethnographic study of young children's play in a community space in the South East of the U.S. She observes a young boy's play with fabric to create structures and fashion designs. Referencing New Materialism, she argues that the child's engagement with the material can be read as a literacy practice and that this interaction creates narratives and transforms both the individual and the thing. She describes these transformative narratives as lived out through actions and bodies rather than through narrative and storytelling (2015: 16). I describe a literacy practice born of the entanglement of movement, place and embodied responses that takes the form of storytelling in movement, a mobile literacy.

Walking a moorland path descending from the West Pennine Moors and glimpsing Darwen town beneath us over a stone wall, Sue exclaims that she remembers walking this path as a 10-year-old child on an autumn Saturday morning. She describes in detail an overwhelming bodily recollection of excitement as she glimpsed the town, as she had as a child, knowing that that afternoon she was going to the market with her auntie to buy material to make a new party dress. She can remember the dress and the red flowered material and says she has not thought about this for many years, 'not since it happened.' She goes on to narrate at length how as she got older, she felt constricted by the familiar small town and on leaving school joined the army and travelled extensively before settling in Europe and having a family. She divorced, her children have left home and she has returned to Darwen to care for elderly parents, a situation that is proving challenging for her. The glimpse of the town over the wall provokes an embodied response that allows for an extended and complex narration to take place.

The practice of walking, I assert, is also a practice of thinking and hence a practice of operating in and representing the world. Both Ingold (2007) and Edensor (2010) consider walking as a way of knowing and perceiving, the rhythms of walking they argue, promote particular, reflexive experiences which depend for their tone and colour on an embodied, affective response to place. Edensor (2010) stresses how in the experiential flow of walking, successive sensory encounters intertwine, impact and colour an internal flow of thoughts. As experiential flow is impacted by the affordances

of place, of terrain and climate, so an internal flow will be impacted and so, I argue, will language use be impacted. It is this symbiosis between place and embodied response in movement, to place, that is at the heart of the language use which is at the heart of my study and it is this experiential flow that moulds the language use I record into specific narrative forms.

Stories told orally emerged and developed as horizons and landscapes emerged and changed as we walked. The oral story was not pre-planned and its structure had no beginning and no end. The mobile stories I recorded flowed through the lived experience of the walk, topics and themes arose in relation to the changing landscape, objects and people within which, around which and with whom we moved. The stories told were paths traced through lived experience and became part of the meshwork of lived experience.

Importantly, as the mobile story was fluid and present it was open ended and mutable. In telling and retelling stories as we walked, we were recalibrating our knowledge and changing our worlds. As Ingold highlights in telling a story, we are retracing a path through the world, but doing so as we extend that path, 'There is no point at which the story ends and life begins' (2007: 93). The story, the ongoing lived experience and the walked path are interwoven lines. Ingold here highlights the transformational possibilities for change inherent in the storytelling experience, possibilities that I will argue are fundamental to the transformational impacts of participation in Health Walks.

Every week Esther retold a similar story retracing her movement from Hong Kong to Lancashire and from ill health to wellness. At the time that we were walking she had lived in Lancashire for two years and was recovering from a period of hospitalisation with bi-polar disorder. She says:

Well yes and walking saved our lives. Because it makes me happy, I like to see people and talk to them and I love the air, you know breathing, good fresh air and when you finish you feel warm and tired and you just feel good. And seeing all the different places, I love to see it and be there, because then I know it and I am at home.

She performs a structured narrative that is subsumed in reflection. She describes becoming well through walking and I record in my field notes that over several weeks Esther repeats this process in a continual re-enactment and retelling of getting well. In Esther's continually retold story she places walking as a transformative life-changing event. Her story always starts with ill health, crisis and despair then a slow movement towards a fitter and happier self. Langellier (2011) recognises storytelling performance as embedded in daily life and fulfilling sense-making and identity construction functions. Similarly, Charon (2007) describes how reflecting through narration on experiences of ill-health can have clinical benefits. Esther tells a story that serves to strengthen her identity as well and settled.

Doreen often talked about her son's recent suicide. She said:

Yes, because nobody made me and I didn't have to it was just easier, and some people knew him like and they know us and they just listen a bit and then I can stop if I want to and talk about other things and look at things you know. But, because I didn't have to, we talked about memories about him first really and then I talked a lot about what actually happened, you know, trying to work it out. Like every week I'd have a little talk about it and then not really talk about it the rest of the week…….it did really help me…

Doreen tells a story about telling stories. She explains how over the year following her son's suicide she would come to walk on Friday mornings with her husband. During my time attending the Friday morning walks I spoke with Doreen every week about John. Sometimes she would recount the events that led to his death, sometimes she would tell stories about his life and sometimes she would talk about what had happened to her family as they grieved.

Doreen's narrative of self-identity had been exploded by trauma. I suggest that in her continual revisiting of stories about John she is re- entwining the strands of her narrative. There is productive potential in the retelling of stories. As Esther retells her story to underline her identity as well, so Doreen retells stories of her trauma to develop a personal narrative of recovery. She describes how the situational and material conditions of the walk afford her the necessary conditions to undertake this task.

Memory and imagination infuse the mobile literacies I record. Edensor (2010; 70) describes how the rhythms generated by walking create an experiential flow comprised of successive moments of 'detachment and attachment, physical immersion and mental wandering, memory, recognition and strangeness….' The act of walking impacts on cognition in such a way that memory and imagination are amplified and I would suggest that stories told are often expressions of this amplification.

Elaine reimagined a place, using her memories to draw us into the past.

Well I was telling you that this was a cricket pitch, right up here, you can just see the gatepost I think where we would go in, and when Keith was in the mill all the mills had different cricket teams and they would come up here on Saturday afternoon and play cricket tournaments, all day and into the evening it would go on forever ……. There would be maybe over 100 people up here, all walking up and the families and that would have food and come for the afternoon... You can't believe it now what it was like here, with all the people and the pitch, lovely place to have it really. Do you remember? Don't you?

Describing the scene in the location lent it a powerful resonance, Elaine pointed out submerged field boundaries and touched a broken-down gate post as she talked. Being able to scan, see and touch the remnants of the scene lent it a vividness and allowed a degree of bodily participation in her narration of a typical Saturday match. The place becomes a place of imagination, in listening to Elaine the place is transformed in our eyes.

I have described instances of individual mobile literacy events. However, there were occasions where I completed a walk with the strong sense that I had taken part in a collective literacy experience. What I observed in my research is not simply a series of separate mobile telling of stories but rather a meshwork of trails and tales that combine to form a collective experience. Collective generation is a vital igniter of this experience. As individual walkers, we all follow the same route and therefore have similar experiences of the landscape and its materiality. As stories are generated through affective response, the stories become part of our environment, of our 'zone of entanglement' (Ingold, 2007: 86) and therefore generate further affectual responses and further stories. At times, there is a strong sense of a dominant theme or tone incorporating all the walkers, their responses and stories, the landscape and objects as they flow along a route.

One walk was dominated by the sight of a new, partly built massive house on the horizon, being built by a local well-known business man. We walked towards the house and were able to draw close by and inspect the building process. Walking back down the valley, away from the house we came across a tiny cottage on the bank of a river. Smoke was curling from the chimney and through the cracked window as we filed past we could see a kettle boiling on a hob. The stories emerging from this walk were about houses and home. Walkers were fascinated by the wealth on show at the top of the hill and the fairy-tale quality of the cottage by the river.

The contrast between the two houses felt as if it structured the whole experience of the walk. In my field notes I recorded that the walk was very strongly dominated by our responses to these two things. I also considered that if I had walked alone, I may have had some fleeting thoughts and feelings about the contrast between the two houses whereas it was the continual flow of streams of chatter focussed on the houses and the sharing of knowledge and gossip about the houses' histories and occupants that turned the experience into such a highly- structured event. It was after this walk that I began to think about how a walk can take on the characteristics of a story when stories are continually told on a walk. This walk had a narrative quality, a focus, a protagonist, a moral and a twist, the houses served as metaphors for wealth and poverty, worldliness and unworldliness. As a group, we improvised and performed this tale as we walked. This walk was unusual in its coherence and singularity of tone and focus. The remoteness and narrowness of the valley and the dominance and extravagance of the house focussed us as a group in such a way as to foreground the intertwining of movement, place, storytelling and objects unique to the experience of walking in groups. I also noted how the shape of the land and the route taken structured the language used. This walk was enclosed within a shallow valley and dominated by walking towards and away from the big house on the brow of the opposite side of the valley. No new vistas emerge and therefore the talk remains focussed on the house as a dominant feature.

The stories that we tell are paths traced through lived experience and become part of that shared lived experience. In this way, the telling and retelling of stories in a group is

a collective act of generation and transformation. The communal experience of becoming entangled in and co-creating a meshwork of meaning and mobility is what it means to take part in mobile literacies and what delivers the intangible impacts of taking part in Health Walks. Now more than ever many of us are using the transformational, restorative potential of the walking and talking experience as a survival mechanism, to promote resilience in uncertain times.

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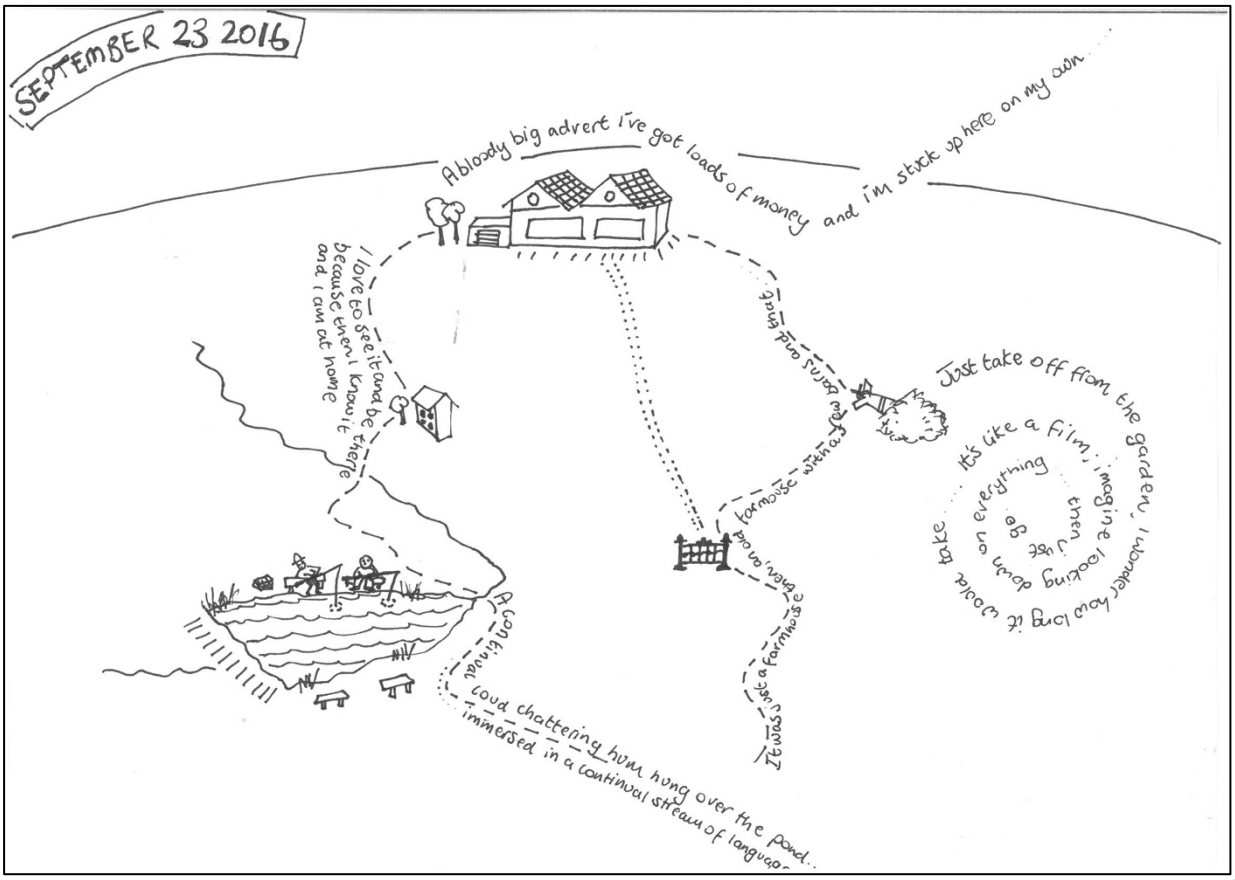

Reflective Teaching in further, adult and vocational education

Maggie Gregson and Sam Duncan

2020, Bloomsbury, London

£26.99

474 pages

ISBN 978-1-350-10200-2

Reviewed by Kerry Scattergood

Kerry is an adult literacy teacher and family learning coordinator in the Midlands. Her research interest is everyday literacy practices, and she is currently researching the seeming disconnect between Functional Skills and everyday literacy.

Reflective Teaching in further, adult and vocational education is the fifth edition of a textbook that aims to provide extensive support to professionals across a diverse range of settings in the Further, Adult and Vocational Education (FAVE) sector as well as providing insight into the importance of being a reflective practitioner and offering advice to help achieve it. This latest edition sees an increased emphasis on work-based learning and classroom communication. The book is supported by a companion volume, *Reading for Reflective Teaching in Further, Adult and Vocational Education,* which offers key readings that support each chapter. In addition, supplementary chapters are available at reflectiveteaching.co.uk.

The book is divided into five sections: the first section covers the theoretical foundations for the three practical chapters that follow. The final section again has a more theoretical slant bringing together some key themes from the earlier chapters to present what the authors call a 'holistic conceptual framework' (p: xv). Blending theoretical and practical elements is a strength of the book in so far as it offers practical support in relation to the key issues of planning and assessing learning while also fostering an understanding of the way in which theory informs practice. Each chapter, including the theoretical chapters, offers a selection of reflective activities and case studies with notes throughout that signpost or link to other relevant parts of the book. At the end of each chapter there is an annotated list of key readings related to the chapter topic: a boon for both practitioner and researcher.

From a practitioner perspective the book is not just a passive read but a useful textbook. I personally have found it a useful tool in several ways. Initially, I was really struck by the main aims of the book: a commitment to the moral purpose of education in seeking social justice and recognising teaching as 'a collegiate professional practice' (p. ix). These aren't hollow sentiments but are seriously considered and are threaded throughout the book. Early within the book, FAVE teacher identity is considered, including how our values inform our practice. As literacy professionals, we are often enacting strong values about what good 'literacy' is, what it is for, and how we can shape the world through our education practices, so a discussion on values is particularly useful. Furthermore, as a teacher researcher, sections considering 'context' and 'spaces' were useful to me, but 'curriculum' even more so. I am particularly interested in our lack of curriculum now in adult literacy, as Functional Skills programmes are written to a set of standards, leaning on the old adult literacy curriculum, but in doing so almost rendering it invisible. The chapter on curriculum really informed my thinking in challenging this and especially useful was an examination of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum (p. 220), which I think all literacy professionals would find of interest.

Of particular significance to me both as a teacher educator and as a union learning rep was a whole chapter dedicated to 'professionalism'. This demonstrates the huge scope of this book and the different areas and contexts of the FAVE sector that it seeks to examine and shine a light on. From my perspective, there is something for all of us, regardless of which of our multitude of hats we might be wearing.

The diversity of the sector is well reflected in the book with for example sections on workplace learning, ESOL, apprenticeships and prison education. However, as with all publications that set themselves as wide a remit as *Reflective Teaching in further, adult and vocational education* there may be some who find gaps. Nonetheless, the book provides much food for thought and I expect it will be returned to over and again by FAVE practitioners who are concerned with developing/ maintaining reflexivity in their practice.

News from the sector

Tara Furlong

Tara is the Chair of RaPAL and can be contacted on webweaver@rapal.org.uk

We're delighted to be holding an online launch for the RaPAL 100 Project after Easter. You're very welcome to join us.

Thu April 29th 4 to 5.30pm - RaPAL 100 Launch
RaPAL have published three editions of the journal on the RaPAL 100 project, which ran last year and surveyed adult literacy provision across the four nations. We're holding an interactive launch event on the 29th of April, comprising short presentations from across the sector, opportunities to discuss in small groups, and to talk to presenters and attendees from across the sector.

If you're interested in attending, please email 100@rapal.org.uk. We will be sending out further information via the members' RaPALlist.

Adult literacies learning during COVID-19
RaPAL have supported BALID (British Association for Literacy in Development) in a small-scale project with BAICE (British Association for International and Comparative Education) which looks at the impact of COVID and lockdown on adult literacies education in the UK. This comparative research includes projects in Afghanistan and the Philippines, and is working to release findings later this year. We would be delighted to hear more from our members.

Skills for Life: A new strategy for English, Maths, ESOL and Digital
I haven't had a chance to read this publication by FETL (Further Education Trust for Leadership) yet, as I've only just learned of its existence: https://fetl.org.uk/publications/skills-for-life-a-new-strategy-for-english-maths-esol-and-digital/ Looking forward to reading over it.

PhD Colloquia
We've held three virtual PhD Colloquia since starting up last autumn, where members discussed their own research in the adult literacies field, and themes of particular interest. Jo Dixon, Southampton University, in March discussed ethical dimensions of her PhD work on increasing digital inclusion for low literate ESOL learners.

On the 20th April, Mary-Rose Puttick, Birmingham City University, is discussing *'Reimagining family literacy': co-creating pedagogies with migrating mothers in third sector spaces*. If you're interested in participating in the PhD Colloquia, please email Tara on webweaver@rapal.org.uk.

Volunteering with RaPAL
If you have any time to spare and would like to take advantage of the development opportunities RaPAL provides in the adult literacies sector, please do consider

volunteering with us. Participation develops traditional officer roles such as Secretary or Treasurer but also experience in forms of digital interaction, teaching and learning; editing, reviews and publishing; event planning; project management; networking… and of course, adult literacies! We are a very friendly, hard-working group.

We have a wide range of roles, from informal and occasional to one year outlines to formal officer roles. To find out more visit the website http://rapal.org.uk/people/

Why not write something for the RaPAL Journal?

We invite contributions from anyone involved in the field of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL education to write and share ideas, practice and research with RaPAL readers. This can be writing from learners, ideas linking research and practice, comments about teaching, training or observations about policy. Our journal is now produced online and so we welcome articles, reviews, reports, commentaries, images or video that will stimulate interest and discussion.

The journal is published three times a year and represents an independent space, which allows critical reflection and comment linking research with practice in the field of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL nationally and internationally.

The RaPAL network includes learners, managers, practitioners, researchers, tutors, teacher trainers, and librarians in adult, further and higher education in the UK. It also has an international membership that covers Ireland. Canada, USA, New Zealand, Australia, South America, Europe and Africa.

Guidelines for contributors
All contributions should be written in an accessible way for a wide and international readership.

- Writing should be readable, avoiding jargon. Where acronyms are used these should be clearly explained.
- Ethical guidelines should be followed particularly when writing about individuals or groups. Permission must be gained from those being represented and they should be represented fairly.
- We are interested in linking research and practice; you may have something you wish to contribute but are not sure it will fit. If this is the case, please contact the editors to discuss this.
- Writing should encourage debate and reflection, challenging dominant and taken for granted assumption about literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

We want to encourage new writers as well as those with experience and to cover a range of topics. We aim to have three different kinds of articles in the journal plus a reviews section; these are slightly different in length and focus. We welcome illustration and graphics for any of the sections and now have the facility to embed audio and video files into the journal. The journal has a different theme for each edition but we welcome general contributions too.

Below you will see more details about the different themes and topics:

1. **Ideas for teaching**
This section is for descriptive and reflective pieces on teaching and learning. It is a good place to have a first go at writing for publication and can be based on experiences of learners and teachers in a range of settings. Pieces can be up to 1,000 words long.

2. **Developing Research and Practice**
This section covers a range of contributions from research and practice. In terms of research this could be experience of practitioner research, of taking part in research projects, commenting on research findings or of trying out ideas from research in practice. In terms of practice this could be about trying out new ideas and pushing back boundaries. Contributions should include reflection and critique. Pieces for this section should be between 1,000 - 2,000 words long including references.

3. **Research and Practice: multi-disciplinary perspectives**
This section is for more sustained analytical pieces about research, practice or policy. The pieces will be up to 4,000 words long including references and will have refereed journal status. Although articles in this section are more theoretically and analytically developed they should nevertheless be clearly written for a general readership. Both empirical work and theoretical perspectives should be accessible and clearly explained. Writing for this section should:

- Relate to the practices of learning and teaching adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL
- Link to research by describing and analysing new research findings relating this and any critical discussion to existing research studies
- Provide critical informed analysis of the topic including reference to theoretical underpinning
- Write coherently and accessibly avoiding impenetrable language and assumed meanings. The piece should have a clear structure and layout using the Harvard referencing system and notes where applicable. All terminology should be explained, particularly for an international readership.

Reviews
Reviews and reports of books, articles and materials (including online materials) should be between 50 to 800 words long. They should clearly state the name of the piece being reviewed, the author, year of publication, name and location of publisher and cost. You should also include your name, a short 2 to 3 line biography and your contact details. You can write the review based on your experience of using the book, article or materials in your role as practitioner, teacher trainer, and researcher or as a student.

Submitting your work

1. If you are responding to a call for articles via the RaPAL email list or directly by an editor you will have been given the email address of the editor(s) for submitting your work, together with a deadline date and the theme of the journal.
2. If you are submitting a piece of work that you would like RaPAL to consider for publication that has not been written as a result of a call for articles, please send it to journal@rapal.org.uk in the first instance. The journal coordinator will then let you know what the next steps will be.
3. All contributions should have the name of the author(s), a title and contact email address and telephone number. You should also include a short 2 to 3 line biography. Sections, sub-sections and any images should be clearly indicated or labelled (further guidance on image size is on the website www.rapal.org.uk.
4. All referencing should follow the Harvard system.
5. Articles should be word processed in a sans serif font, double-spaced with clearly numbered pages.
6. The article should be sent to journal@rapal.org.uk

What happens next?

1. Editors are appointed for each edition of the journal. They review all contributions and will offer feedback, constructive comment and suggestions for developing the piece as appropriate.
2. Articles submitted for the third category 'Research and Practice: multi-disciplinary perspectives' will be peer-reviewed by an experienced academic, research or practitioner in the field in addition to being edited.
3. The editor(s) will let you know whether your article has been accepted and will send you a final copy before publication.

If you have any questions, please contact the journal coordinator by emailing journal@rapal.org.uk

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of learners, teachers,
researchers engaged in
and numeracy. Our suppo
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