Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) Action Research Project

Targeting support for ESOL learners on vocational programmes

Boston College – June 2022

Boston College (2022) *Final Report on the OTLA Action Research Project – Targeting support for ESOL learners on vocational programmes.* London: ETF.

CONTENTS

Targeting support for ESOL learners on vocational programmes
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SUMMARY

This project was set up to evaluate the impact of a small-scale intervention designed to support non-native English speakers who were struggling to take full advantage of their vocational courses. We set up extra classes to focus on helping learners to develop the reading and writing skills needed to tackle their English, maths and vocational courses with more confidence. We intend to disseminate the most effective strategies to all curriculum areas to improve cross-college teaching of non-native English speakers.

RATIONALE

Boston has a large Eastern European population which is reflected in the number of non-native speakers attending Boston College. Almost 25% of our 16–19-year-olds are ESOL learners which contributes to the richness and diversity of college life, but also provides us with significant challenges when trying to ensure that all learners are able to access our full provision and enjoy the same quality of experience as other learners.

The transition from ESOL classes to Level 2 and 3 vocational courses has proved particularly difficult with learners struggling to access the programmes due to the level of their English and academic skills. Even learners progressing from ESOL to Level 1 Business, for example, have difficulty largely due to the fact that they have not mastered the English reading and writing skills needed for their vocational course. Feedback from learners as well as Functional Skills English results for non-native 16–19-year-olds confirms this. Despite extensive pastoral support, attendance and retention on vocational courses like the Business Level 1 is also impacted, with success and progression onto further study significantly affected.

We considered a range of different strategies to support the development of our learners' English and academic skills and help them integrate into their vocational classes more readily. Having completed an assessment of learners' language needs in the Level 1 IT/Business group, to identify the specific barriers learners often face, we decided to focus on setting up extra individual and small group support classes, the impact of which might be evaluated within the time frame of the project. We felt that the extra classes would enable us to utilise a range of resources to target individual support. Originally, our intention was also to work closely with vocational staff on the development of vocabulary resources to prepare learners to take full advantage of vocational programmes. After developing the use of MS Teams Reader and vocabulary resources in the spring term, these have now been disseminated to some vocational areas e.g., Foundation, Pathways to Progress to support improvement across college teaching non-native and low-level English learners.

Other Contextual Information

The college's action research was part of the Education and Training Foundation's OTLA 8 Programme and took place mainly in the English department of our FE college. We worked with two different English groups of Level 1 and Level 2 learners who were also enrolled on either IT (Digital Skills) or Business vocational areas, which are very popular with our non-native English speakers.

APPROACH

The flow chart below outlines how we approached the project and indicates how we intend to continue with our work once the project has finished.

Initial fact finding
- Met with key staff to identify the issues that second language learners were having in their classes and suggest possible ways to address them (Appendix 3d).
- Met with second language learners, Computing Level 1, to discuss the challenges many of them face in this class and what support they think they would benefit from.
- Identified specific support needs using the Starting Point Assessment on Century Tech and observation of learners in both FS English and maths classes (Appendix 2).

Intervention classes
- Based on our findings we timetabled in 2 extra hours of voluntary support classes tagged on to their study programmes.
- A range of different resources and strategies were selected to support their language needs.
- Staff development in use of MS Teams reading tool / Immersive Reader put in place.

Evaluating the impact
- A contemporaneous log of activities was used to record the aims of the activities and encourage reflection on how useful they had been (Appendix 3a).
- Project meetings reviewed the log and session content adjusted as the sessions progressed.
- Learner feedback was collected using an interview and questionnaire (Appendix 3b).
- The progress of 2 learners in their English, maths and vocational classes resulted in 2 case studies (Appendix 2).
- Observations of the sessions were carried out by QA staff (Appendix 3c).

Next steps
- Vocational vocabulary development in class and supplementary aids e.g. glossary, language posters etc.
- ESOL champions.
- Develop assessment/interview techniques for vocational staff at IAG stage to identify if learners have the current language skills to succeed within a 34 week the time frame, alternative routes and support options included.

Sharing what we found out
- Team will create CPD sessions for staff focussing on strategies that worked well and encouraging ways to embed their use in different vocational classes.
- Glossaries will be shared with each vocational area.
- Learners will create posters/ leaflets for new students e.g. Quotes , advice etc.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The intervention classes were set up in November and are scheduled to continue until the end of May. We chose to focus on the impact that these classes have had on the development of two learners, Learner M and Learner N. The classes were popular with learners; their attendance is sitting at 90%, which is much better than the college average for this time of year.

Although the initial sessions were planned using in-class assessment and observations, the content remained fluid allowing teachers to support the individual development of the two learners, often reacting to information identified in their other lessons (Appendix 3a). The individual support was also commented on in observation feedback:

> 'Bespoke delivery clearly supporting the individual learning needs of the two learners' (Appendix 3c).

English, maths and IT teachers and support staff worked together and have been keen to comment on the progress that learners have made since attending the extra sessions (Appendix 2).

Learner N, for example, had difficulties understanding maths examination questions as well as interacting with the rest of the class. Concerted work on developing his vocabulary in the intervention sessions, extensive Learning Support Assistant (LSA) help, as well as the learner's engagement in online resources such as Learning by Questions has proved useful, and resulted in a score of 60% at Entry 3 in his formal assessment in February. In his English classes, this same learner had problems with the reading paper, difficulties with writing conventions, capital letters and full stops, as well as letter formation. His English teacher believes that:

> '[the focused work] done around understanding a text, questions about a text and understanding question words had enabled him to make substantial progress in his understanding' (Appendix 2).

The table below documents the reading progress that learner N made:

First reading assessment	Second reading assessment	December reading exam
11/24 (45%)	12/24 (50%)	21/24 (87.5%)

Learner M has also made progress, with his initial diagnostic reading score moving from 75% in October to 86% in March 2022 at Entry 2 (Appendix 2). Both learners have also made a marked improvement in spelling, grammar and organisation of their writing.

There is LSA evidence to suggest that the learners' participation in their vocational classes has also improved. Learner N, for example, found it challenging to interact with peers in team activities, and would not answer questions when asked, despite knowing the answers. The help he has received from his support worker, coupled with changes in the class set-up, as well as the confidence from extra sessions have had a significant impact upon his relationship with the class. His support worker has noted that that he has joined the Computing 1 group chat and is now prepared to communicate

via Teams:

> *"If his peers see or hear him struggling, they will message him asking if he needs help"*
>
> *(Learner N's LSA)*

He goes on to say that Learner N now seems to be far more integrated into the class and:

> *"[Learner N] will now fool around with his peers whilst waiting for lessons and at times had been seen teasing other peers with little pranks.'"*
>
> *(Learner N's LSA)*

(Please see Appendix 2, LSA comments for further examples).

Learners' own perceptions of their progress, when questioned during a small group support session, seemed to echo the tutors' observations, saying that they felt that the sessions had improved their confidence in all aspects of English. However, the learner feedback survey was not so generous in its findings. We believe the variance may be down to the fact that Learner N completed this at home without tutor support, so there was possibly a misunderstanding within the questions being asked. We will revisit this with the learner at the end of the programme. Feedback from tutors, as well as assessments, continues to support our belief that there has been significant improvement in both learners' academic work and social interaction at college. N is now more confident in speaking in front of others, can order the alphabet and read in English more fluently as can be seen in the tracker records. M has also shown great improvement in his English ability, particularly in grammar and writing skills. These are all small interventions that could not be facilitated in a larger group in lesson and required the intensity of a small group of two learners.

Professional Development

Professional Standard	How our project outcomes demonstrate this standard
1. Reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners.	The project has encouraged us to step outside 'normal' modes of delivery and identify how we can best support new learners to the college, both non-native English speakers (NNESs) and learners with a relatively low English assessment score. Being able to nurture learners in a small group has allowed us to target specific language difficulties which were hindering progress and has also impacted upon their confidence and mindset to improve. As a result, we are also looking at how to develop a more robust Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) process which will inform how we support these learners next year.
4. Be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners to learn.	As part of the project there has been considerable time dedicated to identifying resources and teaching strategies and reflecting on how learners have responded to these. Although not every session was successful, we have identified that, to date, the two learners within this project have made better than anticipated progress. Another point to note is that the learners that took part in this research are on Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and in studying the report and identifying their individual needs we feel that at the time of the review we will have fully met, if not exceeded their needs.
16. Address the mathematics and English needs of learners and work creatively to overcome individual barriers to learning.	Throughout this process we have considered strategies that support learners' English development and how best to support these, not only in English and maths, but equally in their main study programme. Although maths was not initially considered, it is clear to see through our research where significant improvements have been made in this area too (see diagnostic comparisons). This is particularly pleasing as it was not something that was expected and another reason why we intend to invest in this process with an increased number of learners next year. Moving forward we will be adopting more techniques to support a positive mindset with learners in both English and maths though small group interventions using techniques adopted in this research, such as the alphabet tasks and MS Teams reader.
20. Contribute to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others.	We have also begun to offer staff development sessions based on some of the new technology we have used as part of the project. The first was offered in January, and was well received by different curriculum areas, one of which has booked further training April so they can use MS Teams reader as part of their everyday delivery. During our CPD days in June 2022 we will disseminate our findings to curriculum staff and work together to develop bespoke embedded support materials for their areas, which will also include vocabulary books, walls, techniques to encourage verbal participation class.

Organisational Development

1. Improved communication between vocational, English and maths teams.

Professional standard 20 - Contribute to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others

The project has required us to work more collaboratively to identify the specific issues that individuals were struggling with and monitor their progress. Meeting across the three areas has often been logistically difficult but using the log to record what has been done in each session has helped and we anticipate that this will impact on organisational development and the way we work next year. We have identified the following developments so far.

DATE	Lecturer Initials	Activity	What was activity designed to do	Activity Description (Bullet points and include the AfL strategy used)	Did it do what you thought it would?	What went well?
10/01/2022	TG	Small group support to N and M in issues around letter formation.	Both learners working towards Entry 3 English exam which is paper based. The activity helped us to look at alphabetical order, formation of letters and the position of letters.	We used a set of tactile plastic capital letters to put the alphabet in order. They then wrote the lowercase letters beneath the plastic letters. We then moved on to write the letters on a line to gauge their knowledge of where the letters should sit and the height.	The activity highlighted the gaps in their knowledge of the alphabet. It also highlighted incorrect formation of some lowercase letters and many errors in the writing of letters on lined paper.	Both learners understood the rules when explained about tall letters needing to be tall, small letters small, hanging letters to hang below the line. They then practised writing the letters again to demonstrate their understanding.

Figure 1. A screenshot of our session log/tracker.

2. Potential development of the internal quality process.

Professional standard 20 - Contribute to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others.

In order to identify the kinds of problems that second language learners were having in their classes we interviewed the learners and set up observations of the classes. The observations helped identify what needed to be worked on in their extra classes but also highlighted where different strategies might be used to support NNEs and lower-level learners. We are keen to consider how the observation process might be enhanced further to capture this detail and identify if college wide development is required.

3. Change of future starting point assessment and IAG to ensure that the specific language needs on vocational courses are considered.

Professional standard 1 - Reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners.

LEARNING FROM THIS PROJECT

At the beginning of the project, we had planned to do significantly more. However, we quickly realised that many of our intentions were overzealous and more suitable over a longer period of time, so we changed our focus to align ourselves with the immediate needs of the learners within this project.

The implementation of intervention groups has had very positive results and we have also identified a number of factors which will influence how we continue to support our learners next year.

Triangulation of support has had significant benefits over a very short period of time.

Bringing all the staff involved in the progress of the learner together has allowed us to share ideas on different teaching strategies and their effectiveness as well as utilise the expertise of learning support staff. We will try to explore this 'joined up' approach further next year. We also need to increase awareness of the significant role LSAs take within the group, and how they can continue to carry on the work that has been developed in the small support groups. The importance of the additional learner support process in the sharing of planning across a learner's study programme needs to be recognised.

Targeting areas which could have the most impact and that was within our power to supply was important.

We recognise that this is an expensive way of supporting individuals and that this may not have been possible without the funding from EHCP; however, some of the resources and strategies found to be effective can now be shared with both LSAs and class tutors. This targeted small class approach has also been found to be particularly effective when deploying teaching assistants in schools (EEF, 2021).

Strategies which can be used across all classes offer a consistency of approach and may preclude the need to reinvent the wheel for each individual case.

We identified that in many ways we continue to work in silos rather than using a more 'joined up' approach. To support this, the development of Microsoft Teams and how it can be implemented to support small group/learner support is to be extensively researched over the coming months in preparation for the new academic year. This will allow us to update all lecturers/support staff on the learners' study programme with up-to-date strategies as well as significant progress information.

REFERENCES

EEF (2021) *Teaching Assistant Interventions Moderate impact for moderate cost based on moderate evidence.* Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistant-interventions (Accessed: 20 March 2022).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Project Team

Project Role	Name	Job Role	Contact
Project Lead	Geoff Whitwell	TaLC/FS tutor	Geoff-w@boston.ac.uk
Project Deputy	Linda Radford	Curriculum Manager	Linda-r@boston.ac.uk
Project Team	Tracey Griggs	Tutor	Tracey-g@boston.ac.uk
Project Team	Kelly Tizzano	Vocational Tutor	Kelly-t@boston.ac.uk
Project Team	Joe Roulstone	Tutor maths	Joe-r@boston.ac.uk
Project Team	Sam Robinson	Vocational Tutor	Sam@boston.ac.uk
Mentor	Sheran Johnson	Mentor	sheran.johnson@virgin.net
Research Group Lead	Sue Lownsbrough	RGL	sue.lownsbrough@gmx.co.uk

Appendix 2: Learner Case Studies

Below we share case studies from two learners who were involved in the project, learner M and learner N.

Learner M Case Study Information

Leaner M has been at college since September 2021 and is on a level 1 IT course. He has an Educational Health Care Plan and has access to a learning support assistant in all lessons.

M has been identified as having global delay and since his early school years strategies have been put in place to support his development, including basic language development as was identified at school and in his EHCP. His first language is Lithuanian.

Learner M Assessments

Learner M took diagnostics for Entry 3 Reading and Writing in September 2021 indicating a 70% achievement in reading and 57% in writing, whilst his writing has remained the same, there has been a 20% improvement in his reading ability. The extra classes have focussed on a number reading strategies which include the use of MS Teams reader, reading aloud and short focussed reading tasks.
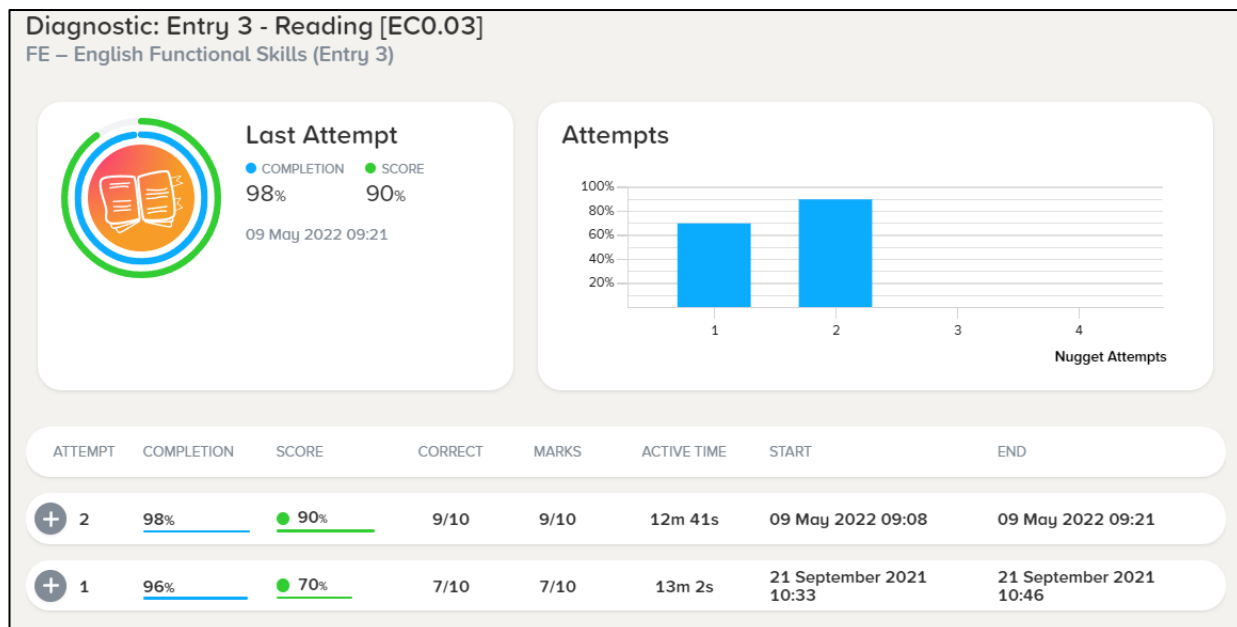

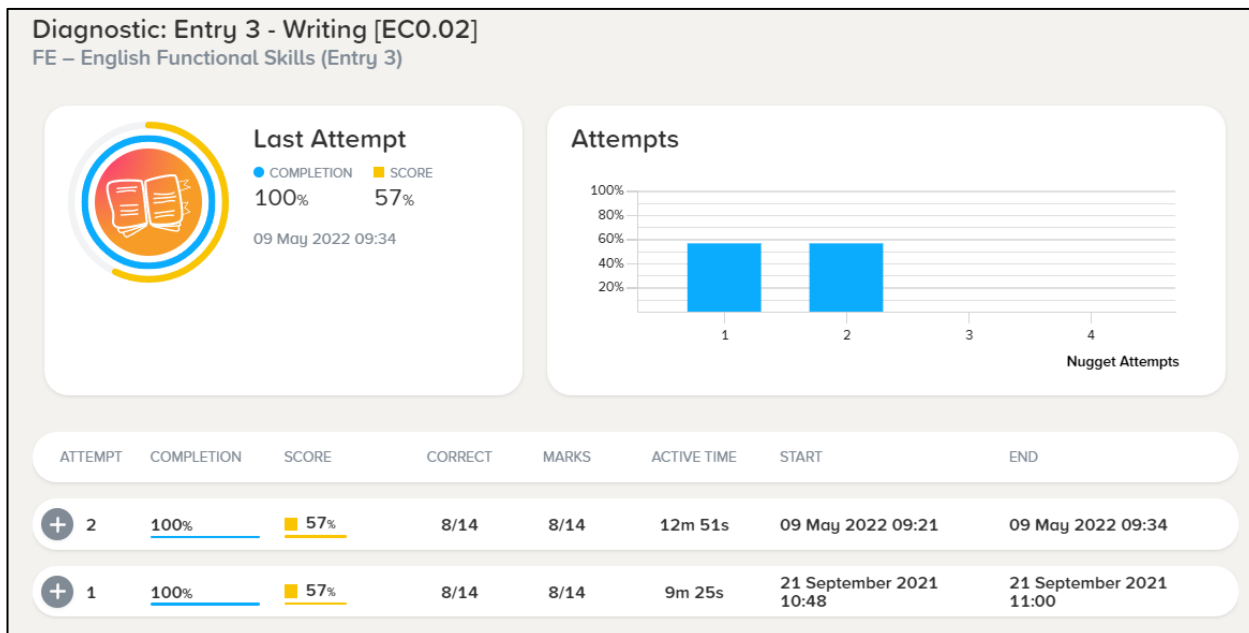*Figure 2. Learner M's diagnostic reading scores.*

Figure 3. Learner M's diagnostic writing scores.

Learner M Progress

Improvement in M's written work is not reflected in the reassessment above however, we feel that his classwork is now showing evidence of improvement. Previous attempts at tackling the writing for the Entry 3 FS English exam resulted in only one or two simple sentences being produced with a lack of clear capitalisation and little in the way of punctuation. The example below shows that he is now using a variety of conjunctions and as his tutor comments he can use capitals and full stops appropriately.

Learner M - Lecturer feedback for maths interaction May 2022

Task 3

You had a problem at college yesterday. Explain what happened.

Write 4-6 sentences.

When the lesson has started I went
to my onedrive to open up my work.
I couldn't get it open because of the
new update. So, I went ~~the~~ to the
normal computer _{and} turned it on. I
managed to get to open my onedrive
and used the rest of my time to
finish my work!

A good
What's good
• You used cap
a sentence
• You used cc
• You used full stops at the end of the
sentence.

To focus on
• Using conjunctions to join simple
Sentences.
'I ~~can~~ couldn't get it open because of the new
update so I went to the normal computer and turned

[post-it note] T.G.
You can see that
M▇▇▇ has taken on
board capital letters,
full stops etc.
We have just moved on to
joining simple sentences
with conjunctions and
you can see this is his
problem area.

Figure 4. Example of marked improvements in M's written work.

Praise Form	
Date	10 May 2022
Reason	
Details	

▇▇▇▇ has developed hugely in the last few months. He now actively participates in class and interacts much more with his peers and staff.

Figure 5. Email commenting on improvement in M's engagement.

Learner N Case Study Information

Learner N has been at college since September 2021 after moving to England with his dad in March 2021. As a young child, his initial milestones were slightly delayed and he only began to speak when he was four years old. He had difficulties with his eye contact, glue ear, pronunciation difficulties and poor fine motor skills. N had some early support from a speech and language therapist. When in Saudi Arabia, N was diagnosed with delayed development. However, support was limited due to the language barrier; N is reported to speak Urdu mostly, with a little English and no Arabic.

Learner N Initial Assessments

N completed his initial diagnostic assessments in reading and writing in November 2021 and achieved 30% in reading and 43% in writing at entry 3.
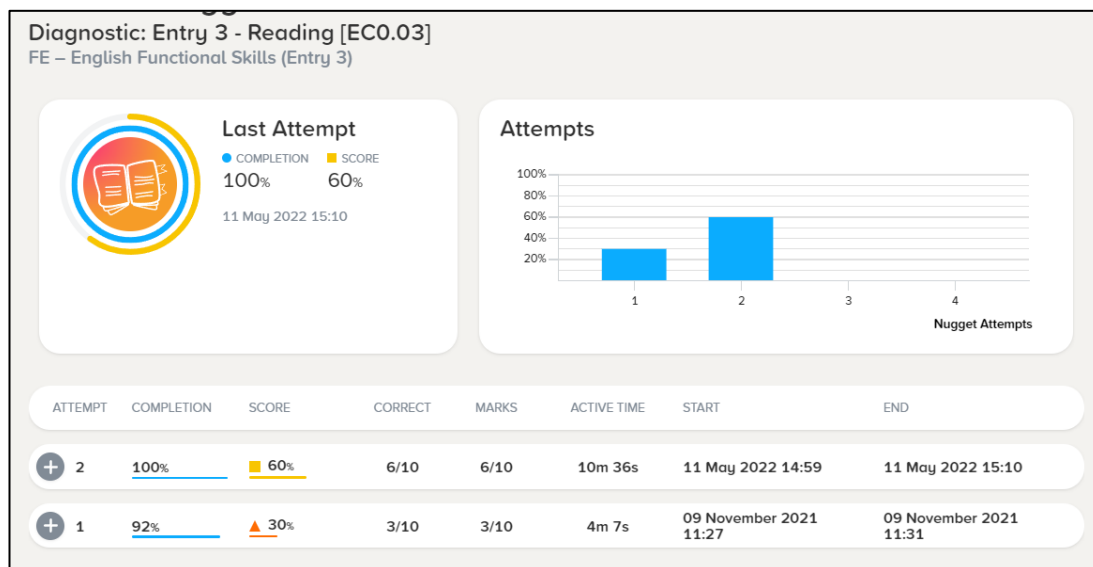

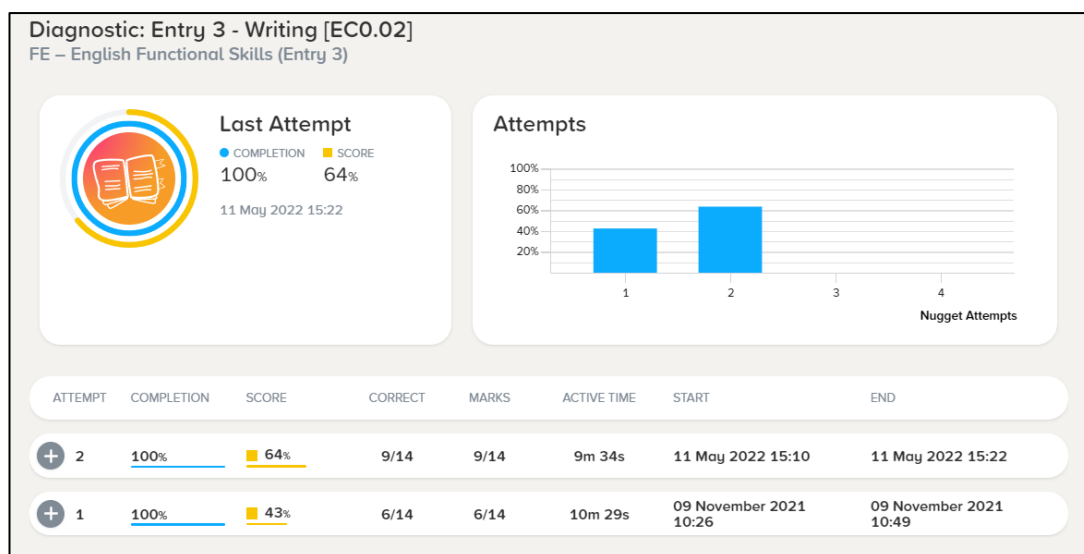*Figure 6. Learner M's diagnostic reading scores.*

Figure 7. Learner M's diagnostic writing scores.

Whilst the questions are predominantly multiple choice on this platform his November reading

assessment indicated he struggled with key words, the layout of text, vocabulary and reading questions - all of which we have supported him with on this project. His May diagnostic indicates that he has improved with layout, tables and some vocabulary and that he had more confidence to answer all questions.
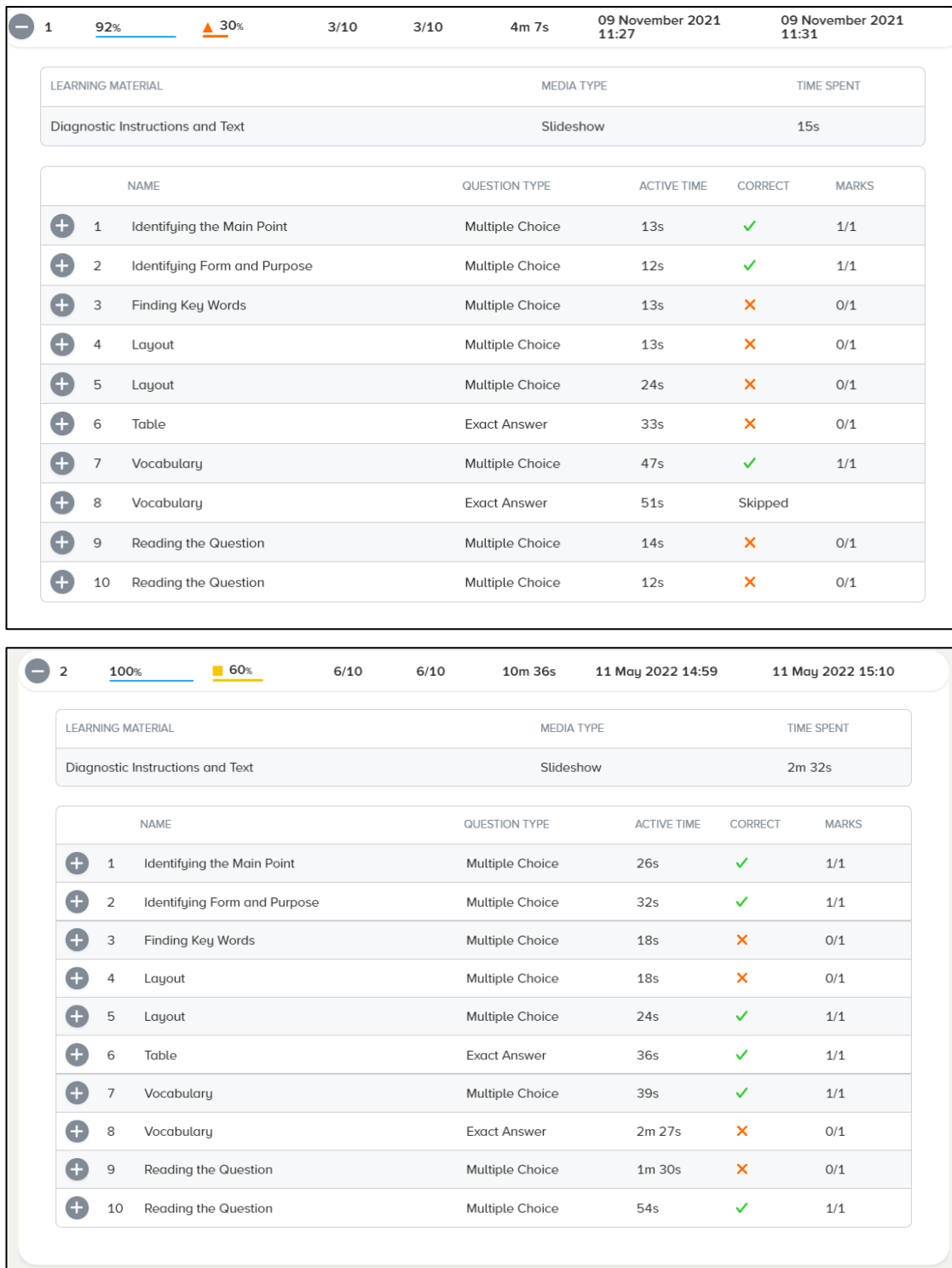
1	92%	▲ 30%	3/10	3/10	4m 7s	09 November 2021 11:27	09 November 2021 11:31

LEARNING MATERIAL	MEDIA TYPE	TIME SPENT
Diagnostic Instructions and Text	Slideshow	15s

	NAME	QUESTION TYPE	ACTIVE TIME	CORRECT	MARKS
1	Identifying the Main Point	Multiple Choice	13s	✓	1/1
2	Identifying Form and Purpose	Multiple Choice	12s	✓	1/1
3	Finding Key Words	Multiple Choice	13s	✗	0/1
4	Layout	Multiple Choice	13s	✗	0/1
5	Layout	Multiple Choice	24s	✗	0/1
6	Table	Exact Answer	33s	✗	0/1
7	Vocabulary	Multiple Choice	47s	✓	1/1
8	Vocabulary	Exact Answer	51s	Skipped	
9	Reading the Question	Multiple Choice	14s	✗	0/1
10	Reading the Question	Multiple Choice	12s	✗	0/1

2	100%	■ 60%	6/10	6/10	10m 36s	11 May 2022 14:59	11 May 2022 15:10

LEARNING MATERIAL	MEDIA TYPE	TIME SPENT
Diagnostic Instructions and Text	Slideshow	2m 32s

	NAME	QUESTION TYPE	ACTIVE TIME	CORRECT	MARKS
1	Identifying the Main Point	Multiple Choice	26s	✓	1/1
2	Identifying Form and Purpose	Multiple Choice	32s	✓	1/1
3	Finding Key Words	Multiple Choice	18s	✗	0/1
4	Layout	Multiple Choice	18s	✗	0/1
5	Layout	Multiple Choice	24s	✓	1/1
6	Table	Exact Answer	36s	✓	1/1
7	Vocabulary	Multiple Choice	39s	✓	1/1
8	Vocabulary	Exact Answer	2m 27s	✗	0/1
9	Reading the Question	Multiple Choice	1m 30s	✗	0/1
10	Reading the Question	Multiple Choice	54s	✓	1/1

Figure 8. N's before and after detailed diagnostic assessments.

N's writing results show that he can now use alphabetical order more confidently, his sentence work has improved, although there is still work to be done on subject verb agreement. Use of articles, often a real sticking point for second language learners, has also improved.

| 1 | 100% | 43% | 6/14 | 6/14 | 10m 29s | 09 November 2021 10:26 | 09 November 2021 10:49 |

LEARNING MATERIAL	MEDIA TYPE	TIME SPENT
Diagnostic Instructions	Slideshow	16s

	NAME	QUESTION TYPE	ACTIVE TIME	CORRECT	MARKS
1	Formal and Informal Language	Multiple Choice	8m 51s	✓	1/1
2	Subheadings	Multiple Choice	1m 22s	✓	1/1
3	Writing a formal letter	Multiple Choice	0s	✓	1/1
4	Reports - Headings	Multiple Choice	0s	✓	1/1
5	Sentences	Multiple Choice	0s	✗	0/1
6	Sentence Punctuation	Multiple Choice	0s	✗	0/1
7	Subject Verb Agreement	Multiple Choice	0s	✗	0/1
8	Plural Words	Exact Answer	0s	✓	1/1
9	Alphabetical Order	Multiple Choice	0s	✗	0/1
10	Articles	Multiple Choice	0s	✗	0/1
11	Suffixes	Multiple Choice	0s	✓	1/1
12	Plain	Exact Answer	0s	✗	0/1
13	Teach/Learn	Multiple Choice	0s	✗	0/1
14	They're	Exact Answer	0s	✗	0/1

Figure 9. N's English diagnostic assessment from November 2021 highlights areas to work on.

| 2 | 100% | 64% | 9/14 | 9/14 | 9m 34s | 11 May 2022 15:10 | 11 May 2022 15:22 |

LEARNING MATERIAL	MEDIA TYPE	TIME SPENT
Diagnostic Instructions	Slideshow	0s

	NAME	QUESTION TYPE	ACTIVE TIME	CORRECT	MARKS
1	Formal and Informal Language	Multiple Choice	32s	✓	1/1
2	Subheadings	Multiple Choice	22s	✓	1/1
3	Writing a formal letter	Multiple Choice	19s	✗	0/1
4	Reports - Headings	Multiple Choice	23s	✓	1/1
5	Sentences	Multiple Choice	23s	✓	1/1
6	Sentence Punctuation	Multiple Choice	1m 21s	✓	1/1
7	Subject Verb Agreement	Multiple Choice	25s	✗	0/1
8	Plural Words	Exact Answer	29s	✓	1/1
9	Alphabetical Order	Multiple Choice	1m 6s	✓	1/1
10	Articles	Multiple Choice	59s	✓	1/1
11	Suffixes	Multiple Choice	1m 22s	✓	1/1
12	Plain	Exact Answer	22s	✗	0/1
13	Teach/Learn	Multiple Choice	39s	✗	0/1
14	They're	Exact Answer	52s	✗	0/1

Figure 10. N's English diagnostic from May 2022 shows a big improvement.

Learner N Maths lesson and exam feedback

Praise Form

Date	01 Mar 2022
Reason	
Details	

Human worked well today. Great interaction with the rest of the class. Was lovely to see.

Figure 11. An email sharing how N is making progress socially and academically.

Learner N Feedback on Entry 3 maths exam taken in April 2022 indicates feedback on his reading skills in maths has improved and identified areas to continue to work on.

Learner Feedback Sheet

EDEXCEL Entry Level Functional Skills Maths

Learner name:	Assessor name:	Invigilator Name:	Paper Set No	Level:	Date/s of assessment:
	J R	G W	1	E3	26/04/2022

Feedback to the learner from the assessor:

Non calculator Paper:
This was a good 1st attempt and you showed you can read and understand the maths language in this paper.
You may need to do more work on problems with measurements

Calculator paper:
You made a good start, and showed you understood time, number order, fractions, as well as words such as largest and smallest.
You will need to do work on reading graphs, understanding the language of scale drawings, and phrases such as 'long enough'.

Learner comments: the My paper wasn't well because of the Slace, I meed partice for that. I can do multication, subtraction, addtion and Algebr but I am weak in a devisons and slace.

Learner progression: *Will resit exam before the end of May 2022*

Figure 12. Learner N Feedback on Entry 3 maths exam.

Learner N Computing /Business Level 1 achievement May 2022

Active		04 Jan 22	Pass
	Active	19 Jan 22	Merit
	Active	24 Mar 22	Distinction
Active		30 Mar 22	Distinction

Figure 13. Learner N achieved a distinction in computing by the end of the project.

Learner N Staff Feedback

Below some staff who have been working with N over the course of the action research project share their feedback.

1. TG - Functional Skills English/ESOL Lecturer

We started looking at sample reading papers. N struggled to make sense of the texts and his answers were not logical. The first sample paper he looked at he got 11/24, 45%, a fail. We talked about how to make sense of the text and looked at question words and the information that was required. The next reading paper he did he got 12/24 50%. After I marked this paper, I asked him to look at it again and to read the questions carefully thinking about the question words. He got 21/24 87.5%.

In his reading exam in December, he got 21/24, again 87.5%. The focussed work we had done around understanding a text, questions about a text and understanding question words had enabled him to make substantial progress in his understanding. Whilst some of these tasks were also done in lesson time, the extra sessions, with no external factors to distract him, allowed us to focus in on particular sticking points and we believe the repetition and reinforcement proved to be advantageous.

N felt secure in the small environment and had no fear of making errors which improved his confidence when doing the exam.

We continued to look at capital letters and full stops. In this writing, he seems to understand that a sentence should start with a capital but after that the size of letters is mixed. After December, the focus shifted to writing. We are now focussing on correct formation of letters and capital letters, full stops and using conjunctions to join simple sentences. You can see my corrections focussing N on the correct formation of letters in his writing.

- In Q1 – he's written a lower case 'f' sitting on the line.
- In Q2 he's put a full stop between 2 random words.
- In Q3 he made the lower case 'l' at the end of the last word like a capital 'L' with the horizontal

tail across.

2. JR - FS Mathematics Lecturer.

Student N began maths at Boston College in the autumn on Entry Level 3. His language skills have presented a significant barrier for him in terms of Functional Skills maths as he has had some difficulty in understanding what exam style questions are asking him to do. There has been a continued focus through his lessons, small group sessions and LSA support in developing his vocabulary and this is now starting to show positive results. N scored 60% at E3 in a formal assessment in February.

N has also engaged well with online resources and has found using Learning By Questions (an e-learning app) useful and productive. This has assisted and encouraged his engagement in maths, and it is clear that he is enjoying his achievements at present.

I expect that N will achieve Entry Level 3 this academic year and there will be a decision to be made for 2022/23 in terms of whether he takes Functional Skills Level or GCSE maths. There are pros and cons for each, and while he may not achieve a GCSE grade 4 at his first attempt, it may well be beneficial for him to achieve a GCSE grade of some kind as he has not yet had the opportunity to gain this.

LL– Learning Support Assistant

Since January 2022 I have been the in-class support for Learner N in computer studies. At first, Learner N was very shy and needed lots of support to understand tasks that were set him. However, he would not verbally inform me of what he was struggling with, so I would have to ask him how he was getting on with the work, then he would point at the screen indicating what he was struggling with. Learner N found it challenging to interact with peers in team activities, nor would he answer questions when asked.

It was observed in maths and English that Learner N knew answers to questions but wouldn't answer the lecturer. Additionally, when Learner N was sat in the eye line of peers, they wouldn't put their hand up to answer so the seating plan was rearranged to facilitate Learner N sitting facing forward. As a result, he didn't have peers in his eyeline which enabled him to answer questions and with slight encouragement to speak louder so he could be heard by others. Although there have been classroom changes for maths and English lessons, resulting in Learner N now sitting in eyeline of other peers, he continues to answer questions.

Learner N is now verbally communicating with peers via MS Teams, to the extent that if his peers see or hear him struggling, they will message him asking if he needs help, at one point whilst doing coding he asked, via Teams messenger, for help and their peer came to help Learner N.

In Computing level 1 a group chat was set up by learners on MS Teams, Learner N was invited to join in, which they did, and through this Learner N is able to communicate with his peers and have jokes between them. The peers understand that Learner N doesn't verbally communicate well with them, but they do try to encourage Learner N to talk without pushing him too much. Learner N will now fool around with his peers whilst waiting for lessons and at times had been seen teasing other peers with little pranks.

During my time with Learner N, supporting him with assignments, we would discuss what is needed and then we would work together. At first Learner N was getting frustrated with the mistakes they were making, and we discussed me scribing/typing. After a while Learner N was happy to type for himself and ask for help with proofreading so we would go through the work, and I would explain any mistakes and corrections.

Learner N is doing very well considering that they moved to the country a year ago and has only been in college since September 2021.

MS Reader Initial Assessment Vocational Word Pronunciation Feedback

Learners M and N
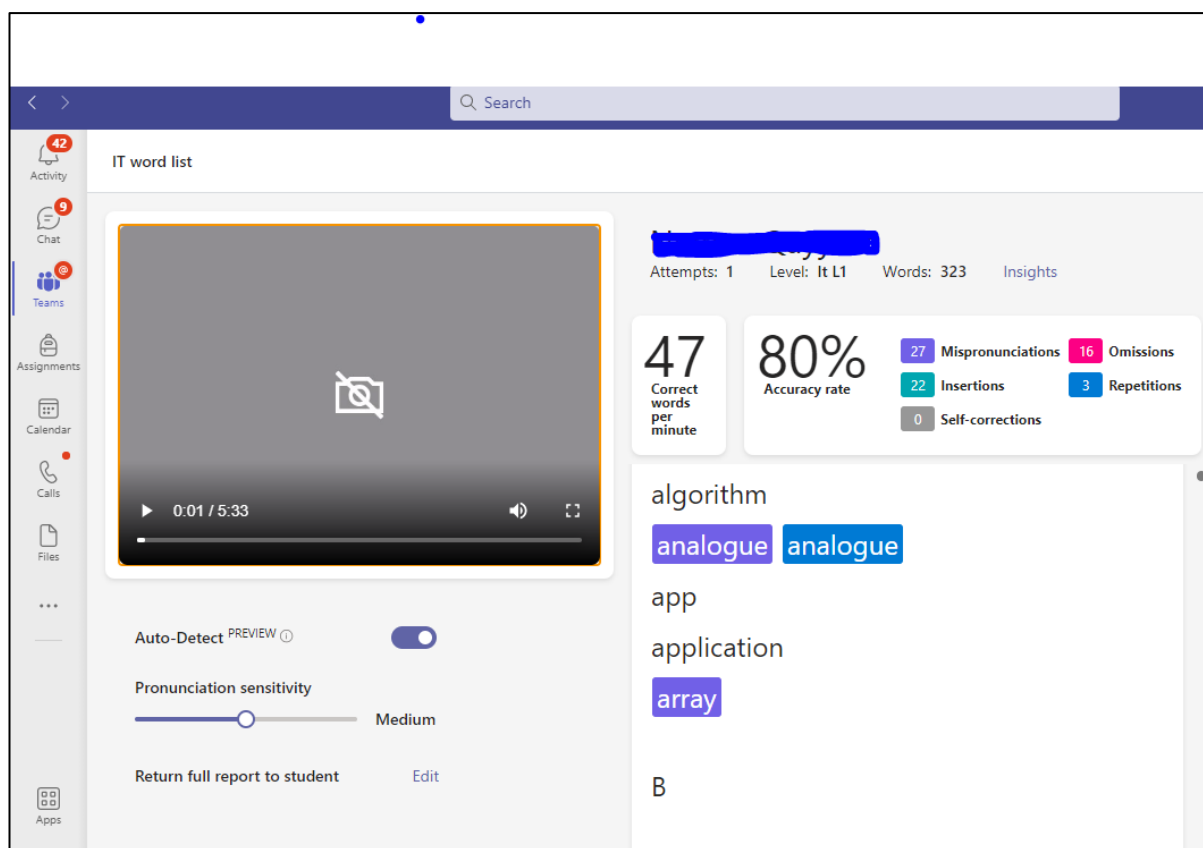
Figure 14. MS Reader Initial Assessment Vocational Word Pronunciation Feedback.

Appendix 3: Project Resources

Appendix 3a: Intervention Tracker (MS Teams)

This intervention tracker has recorded the activities used in the intervention classes and has asked the tutor to reflect on how useful they have been and /or suggest any changes to help with future planning.

Key areas indicating techniques that were successful, and growth of learners have been highlighted on the tracker, which clearly identifies how this project has grown and progressed.

OTLA 8 Project 13b.
Oldham College Inte

Appendix 3b: Feedback from learners
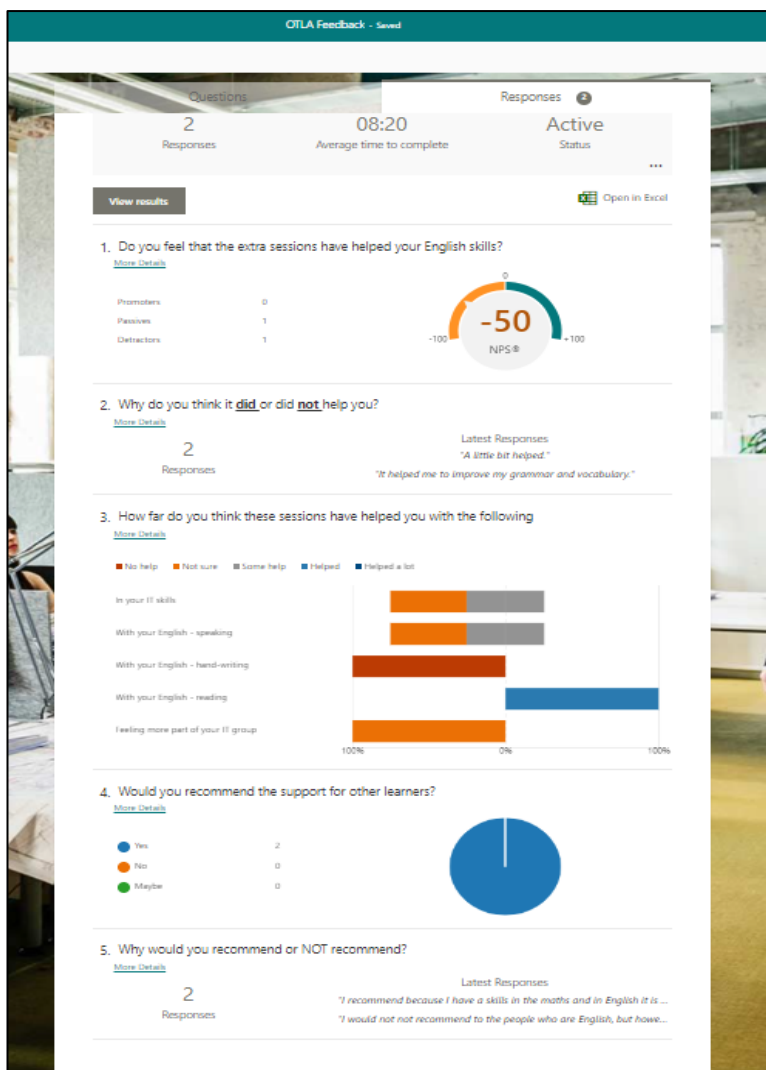
Figure 15. Screenshot showing learner feedback.

Focus group feedback May 2022

Question asked of learners post intervention.

- Do you feel more confident in answering question in class? If not, why

- Do you mix with other learners more both face to face and online?

- What have you done in the support sessions that has helped you the most?

- How confident do you fell with you reading now?

- Has the small group support been better for than lesson and why?

N responses

- Yes, because I do not usually feel confident talk about things in class.

- I like being with my group and talk to them online more now.

- It has improved my English writing and reading too

- I still do not like reading aloud.

- Yes, it has as I can do things again to help me remember.

M Responses

- When a tutor asks me a question, I feel quite confident to answer the question.

- I never had an experience mixing with other learners' face to face or through online.

- What I did in the past support sessions is English and Math to show me how to improve my handwriting and with my grammar skills.

- I feel very confident with my reading skills, but however I sometimes do misread the questions.

- It helped me to improve my English skills and my handwriting also helped me to improve my grammar and punctuation.

Both learners feel they have made progress in these sessions and feel more confident in their English ability.

Appendix 3c: Observation feedback of the extra sessions

The following is a sample from an internal quality observation learners N and M present in this session. The observation clearly identifies how the two learners are being supported and how learning is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Quality observation (small group) Key points

Intent

The intent of this session is to develop NNES English language skills, in order for learners to progress on to mainstream provision/progression from L1 – L2. ICT being the main course.

Excellent learner engagement – Bespoke delivery clearly supporting the individual learning needs of the two learners. The starting point assessment (CenturyTech) has been used effectively to inform the learning plan, although this would benefit from further developed for future sessions.

Implementation

Development of practical vocational skills as well as vocabulary that supports vocational (IT) development.

Patient delivery style supporting the complex nature of the two learners present (both learners have an EHCP). However, there was equally a good pace to activities where learners were clearly making effective progress. Observer comments – Learners stated that the extra sessions are helping and they can see how they are making progress. One learner's initial assignment (September) submission was a 'pass' his most recent was a 'distinction' clearly effective progress being made.

Impact

Assignment progress pass – distinction.

Improved ability in main vocational class as well as greater levels of participation (tutor feedback) (IT)

Grade profile now supports progression from L1 – L2

Participation in other study programme session (Functional Skills - mathematics and English)

Point to consider on the development of this session

Sharing of information across the entire study programme as it might be possible to use the LSA to continue the process of support, but also allow other tutors to see different teaching strategies and their effectiveness.

A group profile that potentially indicates learners needs, especially as these two learners have an EHCP.

Appendix 3d: Initial meeting ideas and plans

OTLA project meeting

Agenda

Location: Conference room
Date: 7/10/21
Time: 4.00 – 5.15

1. What is the OTLA?

Outstanding Teaching and Learning Assessment – ETF

Wider educational improvements from evidence and research largely carried out by practitioners. Professional standards of teacher and trainers form the cornerstone of this project.

2. Our project

ESOL integration into mainstream provision Full time ESOL considering the situation globally and the potential increase in nonnative English speakers attending college this is an ideal time to carry out this project.

Community/college cohesion – collectively feel that this could have a positive impact on both college and social life. Staff identified where progression has been difficult for some learners due to the lack of English skills. This is also evidenced in self-assessment reports.

Consider language, potentially building a glossary of vocational terms. As well as the mastery of more social sight/high frequency words/terms.

Using existing learners to create a 'what helped me' leaflet or poster this could be during or towards the end of the course.

We would like to 'interview' existing vocation learners finding out what did/didn't help them, and what they feel would have been support, or would the group tutors rather do this. – the team were happy to carry out this process but equally saw the benefit of someone else doing it. To discuss post meeting.

We are also keen to hear your suggestions on what you think would and wouldn't help learners moving from FT ESOL into your voc. areas. Obviously, we are looking at a controlled group rather than college wide. The reason behind business/IT and travel being included as an initial starting point is that is where many FT ESOL learners look at progressing to. Team responded with vocational words but also in many cases just general reading and writing ability would be of help. Maths tutor present identified that mathematical terminology can often cause issues so a glossary could be of support. At this point voc. Tutors also said that a glossary could help withing their areas too.

3. Open issues

There is obviously funding for us to carry out this research which can be used for various things supporting the development of this research…. As well as cake!! We are looking at using the small group support fund to enable us to support the learners as well as this project. There was also a suggestion that there might be further opportunities to support learners within the classroom setting

possibility of Learning Support Assistant (LSA) as one potential learner also has and EHCP and this would fund the possibility of this happening. General consensus from staff was that this could be a very supportive process for learners but were also concerned about heavily timetabled sessions.

We would like an idea of appropriate questions to ask learners to best identify how they feel would best suit their needs moving forward. Again, suggested that learners from IT and business would meet the needs of this project as their progression in the past has been impeded by their lack of English skills. No feedback as to potential Q/A. GW to meet with voc. group/s to have open discussions.

Time – when? When would this fit best into an already busy academic year? – Staff were happy to progress with the project, all saw the benefits and would welcome support in the vocational setting. GW TG KT to discuss going forward with the two groups.

Teams English reading – Development of electronic resources to support English development.

4. AOB

Appendix 3e: Staff development comments and feedback from ILT Manager

Head of Digital Learning – Philip Peatling

In my role as Head of Digital Learning we are always looking for ways in which to help support learners with their educational development, using digital tools but also allowing for flexibility of delivery methods.

The Reading Progress feature in Microsoft Teams has given us an excellent opportunity to help learners progress their reading skills. After the initial staff upskill training, we were able to facilitate a small cohort of learners as a control group to explore the software and its suitability. The success of this has led us to push this out to the wider college community.

It was identified that after reviewing the staff development, there was a need to give further training so that this process could be used to support both native and non-native learners with their initial assessments in English.

The reading application has allowed us to measure progress with the control group and create platform to support learners' confidence to assist with preparing for general classroom activities. I feel that the video feature of the learner assessment and feedback report thereby generated, gives staff authentic and reliable assessment information, that allows for a more coherent planning process to target key areas of learner development.

Philip Peatling – Head of Digital Development

Appendix 4: Participants and Stakeholders

No of learners?	**2**	No of staff?	**31**
No of organisations?	**1**	No of employers/ stakeholders?	**1**

Appendix 5: Research/ Evaluation Approach

Participant/observer (e.g. practitioner reflective accounts, logs)	**X**	**Interview/survey** (e.g. polls, questionnaires, learner interviews)	**X**
Observation of practice (in person, video, observation notes)	**X**	**Document analysis** (e.g. learner work, session plans, annotated resources, policies)	
Custom test/assessment (of knowledge, skill, attitude, participation) for your 'intervention'		**High-stakes learner assessment** (e.g. A Level results, End Point Assessment, BTECs	
Before/after assessment (e.g. measures of progress or change in attainment, participation)	**X**	**Comparative trial** (e.g. comparing participants' outcomes against a 'control' group	
Other (specify):	Action Research.		

Thankyou

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