



**ESSENTIAL DIGITAL SKILLS
ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS**

**FINAL REPORT ON THE EDS ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT –
SUPPORTING LDD LEARNERS USING MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Westminster Adult Education Service

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For further information regarding the EDS Action Research programme and this project go to <https://ccpathways.co.uk/essential-digital-skills/>.

The programme was delivered on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation by -



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Final report - Supporting LDD learners using Microsoft Teams

Westminster Adult Education Service

This project developed a session strategy and supporting resources for tutors working with learners who are accessing a Microsoft Teams webinar for the first time. The session and resources have already been trialled successfully with positive feedback from learners both over the phone and in learning resource centres.

Summary

The project focus was on using Microsoft Teams and getting learners up and running on this platform. These are learners who have never used this app before and prior to lockdown the use of digital within the curriculum was not explored with them.

The first challenge to overcome was to get learners logged on and using Teams. Once this became regular and more familiar, we wanted to experiment with other activities and resources which would enable learners to use the chat function in Teams to be able to interact with other learners in a classroom.

This activity is important for our learners as Microsoft Teams provides a digital space that brings learners together to enable them to have conversations with each other and allows us to provide support with their learning. It enables them as learners to take part fully in their own learning, as well as achieving the main aim of encouraging collaboration between learners and tutors.

Rationale

The first COVID-19 lockdown in spring 2020 taught the team a lot about what learners needed to be able to engage with online learning. When coming back into the classroom, the team were keen not to lose what had been learnt, including effective embedding of digital skills. The aim of the project was to develop a resource to promote independence with learners with LDD. Learners needed tailored support to access programmes like MS Teams; teachers were spending hours supporting learners to do so, so we decided we needed to create resources to support this process.

The need for the support resource was identified due to a recent induction session that one of our team had with a new learner which took place over the telephone and lasted 2 hours. This was because the learner was unable to comprehend the original induction document, which was only accessible from the website. Given that these learners faced sufficient challenges accessing the online space, this was far too difficult for them. Based on this tutor-learner experience, our first thoughts were that an image-based support resource demonstrating how to log in for the first time, which can be sent to learners' homes, may be the best way forward.

At the beginning of the project learners faced difficulties in logging onto Teams and they needed to understand how to use Microsoft365 in the first instance to use Teams properly. In addition, learners with difficulties and disabilities found it difficult to navigate the internet and lacked patience when content was being downloaded to the web browser, which resulted in them repeatedly clicking, causing multiple pages to pop up.

By developing a resource that specifically focused on providing a Teams induction we hoped to allow more learners to log on to Teams. This access would give them confidence and allow them in the short term to progress on their existing course. In the medium term this would allow them to access a greater number of other courses.

Approach

The team needed to consider the varying needs and spiky profiles of the learners. As a first step, the induction process was reviewed, with the aim of better understanding learners' digital skills and capabilities.

As a result of this review, we focused our initial attention on one specific resource to identify how learners can be helped to develop digital skills and confidence. We also hoped to develop an additional resource for slightly more advanced learners.

We developed a learner guide to support the wider induction onto Teams of learners who are operating at Pre-Entry Level. We were unsure of what format this would take and from discussions with our EDS teachers who deliver the EDS qualification to mainstream learners, we decided to incorporate some elements of an existing induction resource that they were using with their learners.

A 'how to access guide' for MS Teams was developed which consisted of a two A4 page visual resource that signposted learners through the steps on the WAES website to log in to MS Teams (see Appendix 2).

Professional learning: Evidence of changes in teaching, learning and assessment practices

From the tutor-learner experience we quickly realised that time spent developing a clear resource and a step-by-step guide for learners would help reduce time spent 1:1 supporting MS Teams login and resource downloads. Previously this was taking anything from 1 to 2 hours of support outside the classroom, which was in addition to the GLH provided by the course being undertaken.

We observed good practice being undertaken by colleagues who worked in Community Learning. We filmed a Community Learning teacher demonstrating to learners how to access MS Teams via their phones. This was done in a classroom-based setting and required the use of the interactive whiteboard. In the observed

session there were three participants. The total duration of the session was 1.5 hours. Our observation revealed that this was an efficient use of time.

We had also identified by observing the learners we worked with that the major stumbling block was that many learners with learning difficulties and disabilities were not aware of their student ID numbers, despite wearing a lanyard which displayed them. Some learners also had challenges in recalling their date of birth and some did not know their date of birth. The learners' birth date was the required initial password, but they had challenges in inputting this. The knowledge from these observations further informed the presentation of how to complete this requirement in the resource (see appendix 3).

An additional necessary learning experience was a greater understanding of how to access MS Teams on a smartphone, as we had initially only been focusing on laptop access. Using a smartphone requires the downloading of the Teams app which was an additional step that was not considered before, as laptop access of MS Teams can be done through the browser.

Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

The LDD team worked collaboratively with the EDS tutors in the design and implementation of the induction resource. See figure 1:

<p>3</p>	 <p>Once in the WAES homepage. Click on Learners on the far right hand corner.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>You will be asked to login.... Email: yourstudentnumber@waes.ac.uk (e.g.123456@waes.ac.uk) Password: 6-Digit date of birth</p>

Figure 1: Induction resource

Having a visual aid showing the hyperlinks required to access the intranet, along with clear examples of username and password addressed signing in issues for learners.

We were able to observe community tutors inducting learners onto Teams and this helped shape our resource ideas further.

The EDS tutor assisted the design process of the induction materials which was directly informed by their own experience of delivering the new EDS qualification. With this in mind, as an aspiring qualification for some of our LDD learners, we felt that it was very relevant in supporting our learners onto further accredited qualifications.

During a recent QIP meeting the quality manager, impressed with the action research being undertaken, suggested that the ESOL team would also benefit from having access to the finished resources which could then be amended as necessary to meet the needs of their learners during their digital induction. Due to the simplicity of the resource design and the ease of language accessibility the resources lend themselves to being used across the wider curriculum for a wider range of learners operating at the lower ability scale.

The team aligned themselves with colleagues from other departments, to see where there was consistency and inconsistency in digital support and set up.

From this we identified that ESOL and community-based courses used tablets and smartphones to access Teams and greater emphasis was given to live demonstration. This was in contrast to our approach which consisted of producing a resource for learners, which they would then follow through the steps as directed. This was done to promote confidence and independence, to further enable learners, using PC and laptop only.

Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

As part of the action research, we worked closely with and tracked the progress of two learners, DB and LKB (see Appendix 6).

To overcome digital poverty LKB was provided with a smartphone which we secured through The Good Things Foundation, who aim to work towards a goal where everyone benefits from digital access.

LKB is now able to access Teams on the smartphone as well as on a newly acquired tablet. He now regularly communicates with the project lead using the Teams chat facility (see Figure 2 and Appendix 4). In addition, he is now confident in writing emails and has communicated using these (see Appendix 5).

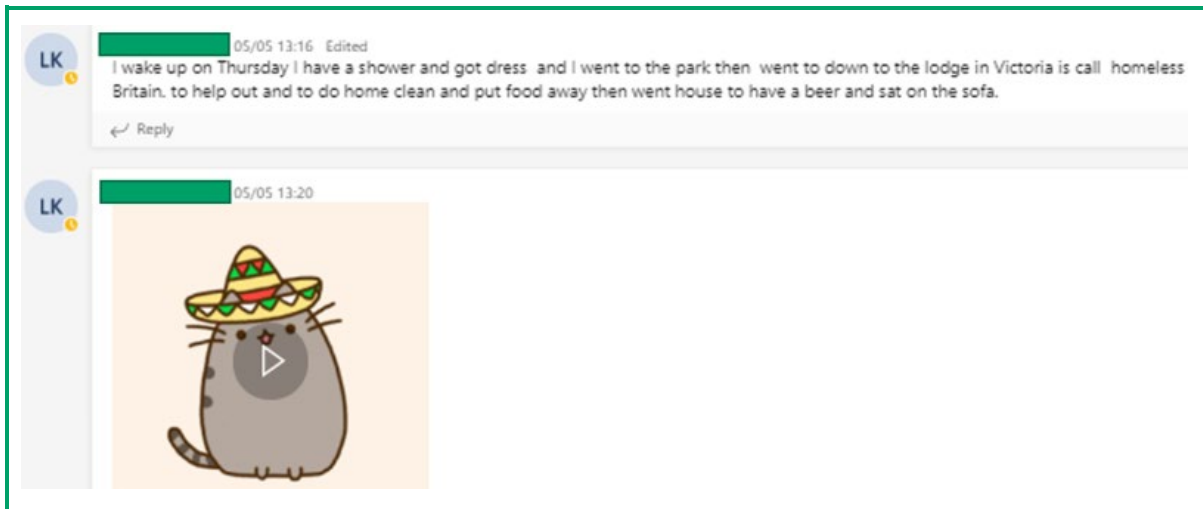


Figure 2: LKB using MS Teams chat facility to communicate with teacher and peers.

LKB now uses the chat facility outside normal class time to communicate with peers.

During lockdown 3, DB maintained engagement on two different courses which were delivered on Teams. DB completed his courses during term 2 and did not enrol on any courses in term 3.

DB: *"I now prefer doing courses online and learn more by doing it this way".*

LKB: *"I was never happy around using laptops and preferred my phone, but this has now changed.....I broke my phone in lockdown and the college helped me get a new one, which helped my studies".*

The final resource (see Appendix 2) has been used for learners who have newly enrolled onto term 3 (April 2021 starts). From a cohort of 5 learners, 4 learners were able to use the resource independently and access Teams. One learner required prompting from the learning support assistant, which consisted of them sitting beside the learner to remind them of their DOB and learner ID number. This was a remarkable distance travelled for new learners, as previously this would have taken the whole class time.

The resource has now been adapted due to the way learners access the college system, this was done so to improve GDPR compliance, however this has added an additional barrier for this group of learners, more so that this was done mid-term. Taking part in this project made us realise that any change in resource needs to be carefully managed so as not to cause anxiety and distress to learners.

This project allowed us to think about learners holistically and to consider their diverse circumstances. We were already aware of the learning difficulties and disabilities that the learners had arrived with, however this was further compounded


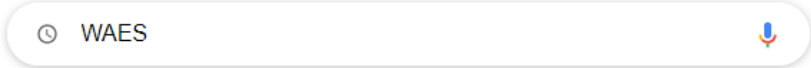
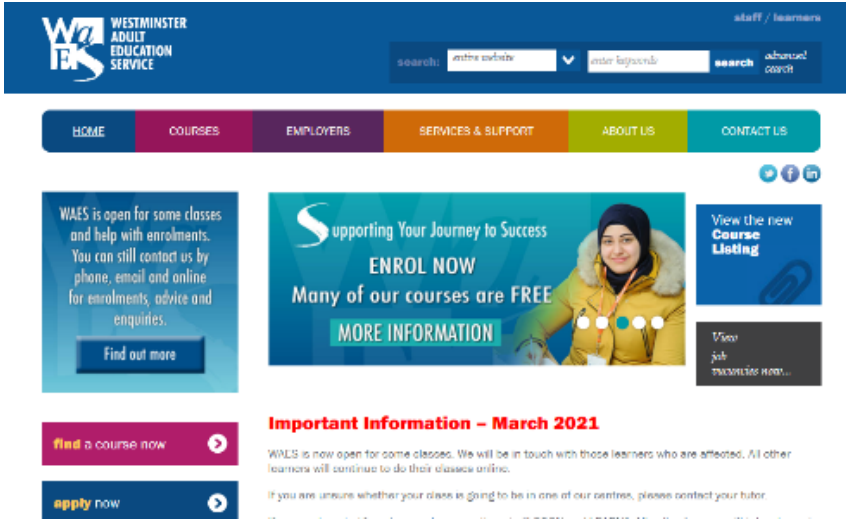
when considering limited access to devices, connectivity and space to learn when using a digital platform. The impact of lockdown on these learners was not considered in this project and further work is planned to ensure content is reflective of potential trauma experience as a result of COVID-19, for example fear, loss, isolation, abuse or financial difficulties.

Appendix 1 - The project team

Project Role	Name	Job Role
Project Lead	Jaspal Dhaliwal	Head of Area
Deputy Lead	Maysie Brown	Coordinator
Project Team	Sumaiya Ali	Tutor
Project Team	Paulette McIntosh	Tutor
Project Mentor	Lynne Taylerson (ccConsultancy)	
Research Group Lead	David Prinn (ccConsultancy)	

Appendix 2 - How to access Microsoft Teams using your WAES account

This resource was developed to increase participation for LDD learners.

<p>1</p>	 <p>Go onto the Internet and type in www.google.co.uk</p>
<p>2</p>	 <p>Type in WAES in the search bar and press enter on your keyboard.</p>
<p>3</p>	 <p>Once in the WAES homepage. Click on Learners on the far right hand corner.</p>

4

You will be asked to **login....**

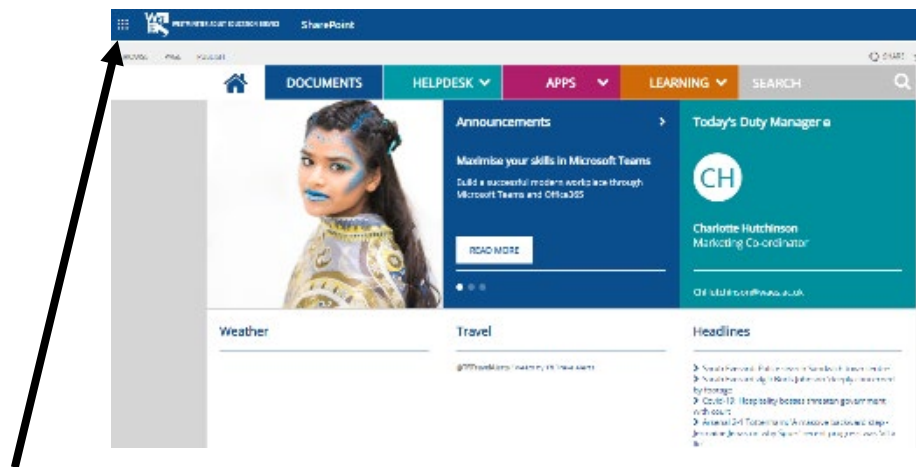
Email: yourstudentnumber@waes.ac.uk

(e.g.123456@waes.ac.uk)

Password: 6-Digit date of birth

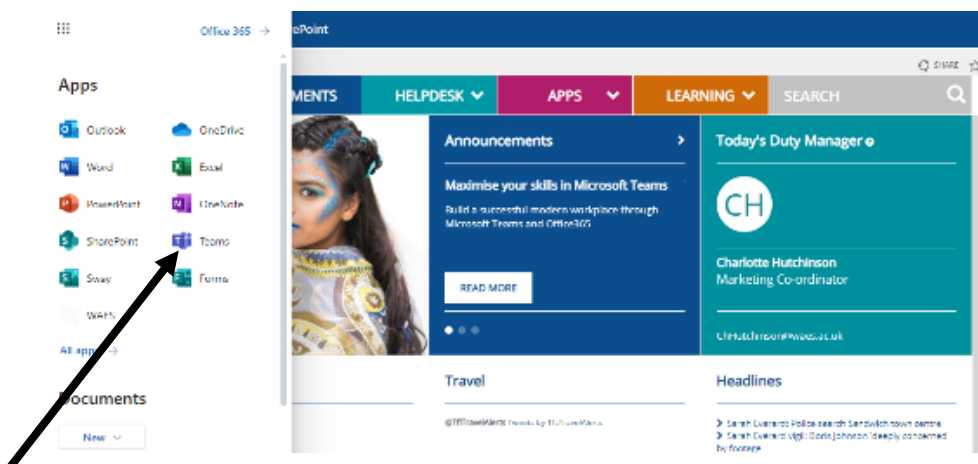
(e.g 250786)

5



From the **Share Point Homepage** you will click on the **App Launcher** square on the left.

6



Open the **App Launcher** click on **Microsoft Teams**

Appendix 3 - PPT of How to access Microsoft Teams using your WAES account

This is the resources presented using PowerPoint.

Clipboard Slides Font Paragraph Drawing Editing

1 How to access teams
From Home
★ 00:15

2 How to access teams
• Go onto the Internet and type in
• www.google.co.uk
Google
★ 00:02

3 Type in **WAES** in the search bar and **press enter** on your keyboard.
Google
WAES
★ 00:01

4 Once in the **WAES** homepage. Click on **Learners** on the far right hand corner.
WAES
Learners
★ 00:01

5 • You will be asked to login....
• **Email:** yourstudentnumber@waes.ac.uk
• (e.g.123456@waes.ac.uk)
• **Password:** 6-Digit date of birth
• (e.g. 250786)
★ 00:01

6 From the **Share Point Homepage** you will click on the **App Launcher** square on the left.
SharePoint
App Launcher
★ 00:01

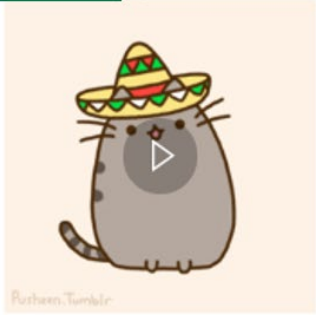
7 Open the **App Launcher** click on **Microsoft Teams**
Microsoft Teams
★ 00:01

Appendix 4 - Using Chat in Teams

Learners using the chat facility in MS Teams.

05 May 2021

LK 05/05 13:16 Edited
I wake up on Thursday I have a shower and got dress and I went to the park then went to down to the lodge in Victoria is call homeless Britain. to help out and to do home clean and put food away then went house to have a beer and sat on the sofa.
Reply

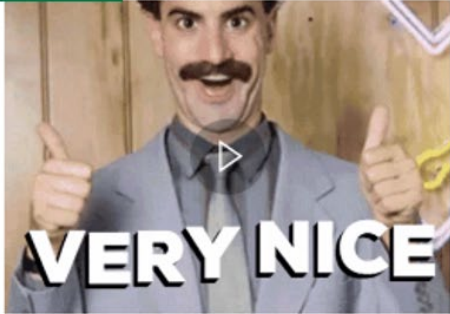
LK 05/05 13:20

Reply

09 May 2021

LK 09/05 18:21
Hi how are you doing today
Reply

12 May 2021



LK 12/05 13:14
on Thursday I wake up and get dress and went out to the Victoria to help out the homeless and went home to sat on the sofa and watch youtube
Reply

LK 12/05 13:15

Reply

Appendix 5 - Using email with Microsoft Office 365


Learners using email to communicate with teachers.



Re: 21-04-21 digital skills level 2

 
Wed 21/04/2021 14:57
To: Maysie Brown

thank you so much and I have read the power point



best regard



From: 
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 2:47 PM
To: 
Subject: Re: 21-04-21 digital skills level 2

thank you, please open this attachment and see if you can read it.


Maysie

From: 
Sent: 21 April 2021 14:44
To: 
Subject: 21-04-21 digital skills level 2

hi Maysie

I am do digital skill level 2

best regards



[Reply](#) | [Forward](#)

Appendix 6 – Case Studies

These are the two case studies of the learners who engaged with the project.

DB

Has Moderate Learning Difficulty and suffers from anxiety.

He has been shielding since January and has not wanted to come into college because he does not feel safe.

He lives in sheltered accommodation but has carers to support him. He uses his laptop mainly for playing games on.

He is very independent and will often work on his smartphone and conduct research.

DB has now stayed online and is accessing the class from home when. He does need his carer to remind him of when classes take place. He is an active member of the class and wants to further continue his skills development.

LKB

He is very much a smartphone user and loves using his phone to access work and email teachers regularly.

Although he has a laptop, he likes using his phone more.

He has now completed an Entry Level 1 Digital Skills for Life and has progressed onto the next level.

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