

# **OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

**FINAL REPORT ON THE OTLA PHASE 7 (ENGLISH) PROJECT –  
ONLINE LEARNING APPROACHES  
ShIPLEY COLLEGE AND WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE**

Shipley College and Waltham Forest College (2021) *Final Report on the OTLA Phase 7 (English) Project – Online Learning Approaches*. London: ETF.

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This resource was produced as part of the Education and Training Foundation's OTLA programme, which was funded by the Department for Education. To learn more about the OTLA programme please visit: <https://et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/professional-development/practitioner-led-development-and-research/otla/>.

For further information regarding the OTLA Phase 7 (English) programme and this project go to <https://ccpathways.co.uk/practitioner-research/otla-7/>.

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# Final report - Online Learning Approaches

## ShIPLEY College and Waltham Forest College

ShIPLEY College, Bradford and Waltham Forest College (WFC), London collaborated to use digital technology to support the progress of GCSE English re-sit students working face to face and online during lockdown 2020–2021.

### Summary

Our aim was to share ideas, resources and innovations in the teaching of post 16 GCSE English Language between the teaching teams from two colleges in the north and south of England. The challenge we wanted to explore was centred around the question: How can we engage GCSE English students using digital technology for learning?

ShIPLEY College is a small Further Education College situated in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Saltaire, in the District of Bradford. Our local population is culturally and ethnically diverse and this is reflected in the student cohort. At Waltham Forest College, we are one of the most diverse colleges in London and are even more diverse than the local community. Our borough is one of the most culturally rich areas in the country, but also one of the most deprived. There are 97 different languages spoken and our students are drawn from across London and from a wide variety of backgrounds.

### Rationale

The project was born out of a collaborative relationship between two Advanced Practitioners who had already worked together on a pilot study to engage learners through using webinars. We wanted to cement this cross-organisation relationship and build on some of our findings as well as investigate how we could develop students' confidence in transferable skills for further and higher study as well as in the workplace. We hoped to learn from the participants – both students and colleagues - about how our learners could be encouraged to help themselves to learn. We also wanted to develop a professional exchange of ideas and resources.

Our intention has been to engage students through using authentic, collaborative activities and facilitate cross-centre peer feedback to support their development both in terms of GCSE and also in developing transferable skills relevant to progression.

We were originally concerned about motivation and engagement, particularly how we engage students remotely using digital tools and this has proven to be a pertinent area of interest during lockdowns. We wanted to harness the power of technology (for example, Google and Microsoft Forms) to easily collect feedback from students about face to face and online methodologies in a qualitative way with short, regular responses from both staff and students to trace developments. We wanted to gain

feedback about engagement, confidence, progress and the effectiveness of learning strategies from our groups and from specific students.

## Approach

Both colleges created content to be used with our own students and with each other's. Shipley created a webinar and digital learning materials exploring Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (Stoker, 1897) and this was co-taught at WFC. Shipley students wrote responses to the set tasks, which WFC students discussed and gave feedback on. Both cohorts learned from the experience in several ways, including reflecting on how they approached such tasks themselves, and how they engaged with texts in their own writing.

There is much research on Assessment for Learning and student engagement (see, for example, Black and Wiliam, 1998). Our research with students also revealed that participation in self- and peer-assessment activities enhanced both their engagement and their achievement. We found that students 'didn't hold back' with their comments and that they enjoyed the process of giving feedback.

Comments on other learners' work were constructive, for example:

*"Never start a sentence with 'I think', expand your vocabulary"*  
*"Use a better adjective than 'scared' such as 'worried or anxious'".*

We found that engaging in peer-assessment also gave students the confidence to voice their opinions:

*"In my opinion, I feel as if JW evidence is a much stronger piece and more detailed because he goes straight to the point in detail of how the writer is subconsciously feeling. In addition, he uses more quotes to back up his point".*

WFC created a webinar and digital learning materials exploring Rudyard Kipling's *The Mark of the Beast* (Kipling, 1890). Shipley students learned from the resources and responded with a range of literary analysis and imaginative writing based on the theme.

As the second lockdown occurred and the prospect of the planned exchange visits was thwarted, the action researchers changed course and WFC wrote letters to the students at Shipley, introducing themselves, sharing a little about their lives, and writing about their experience of studying GCSE English.

The learner voice has been captured throughout and both partners in the collaboration have learned from the shared experience. This can be seen in the students' responses at the beginning and towards the end of teaching by two parallel surveys conducted across both colleges as well as at various points in between at WFC (**Appendix 1**).

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

This year has brought challenge and change; our collaboration has enabled us to respond to the immediate need to engage learners remotely and to develop our practice. Both colleges had cohorts of students to teach and needed to respond to their needs, but the project enabled us to share our passion about teaching, discuss new ideas and promoted a culture of sharing ideas and academic exchange.

Digital learning has become the new norm! Staff have upskilled in a way we never thought would be possible and this will have a long-term future impact on teaching and learning. Students have also come to appreciate what we offer in college and the relationship and collaboration between students and staff has proved, this year particularly, to be a central and invaluable part of the educational experience.

The structure of using quick response methods to gather student feedback and reflection has allowed us to put the student voice at the centre of our planning and preparation. When surveys or polls were completed, the practitioners 'drilled down' on individual responses to gain more insight as well as to respond to particular needs, and often outside of the classroom contact space. A typical example of this is when a WFC student mentioned they would like extra sessions and/or practise exam papers to do in their own time; these requests were discussed with individuals and accommodated for wherever appropriate. In another example, students were able to share their feelings about how they had responded to learning in lockdowns before they returned to face-to-face sessions which tutors could follow up. Around half of our learners wanted to continue learning online.

One learner commented:

*"I feel like online no matter the time or place, I find it easy concentrating at home without being disturbed."* (Appendix 1).

The student work attached in the appendices demonstrates high engagement from our learners which has affected how we plan and the activities we choose. Our collaboration has stimulated us to reflect on our practice and motivated us to share what we have learned. To summarise our key learning, we can reflect that students can be motivated and engaged with different types of learning (whether online or face-to-face sessions) using a variety of digital tools, and in anonymous as well as identifiable ways. Aside from this, when students are made aware that peers will be reviewing their work (for example for reading comprehension/evaluation skills), and that they are writing for a 'real' audience - as opposed for a teacher/examiner - they are much more likely to make extra effort in the production of work. In practice, peer assessment turns out to be an important complement to self-assessment. Peer assessment is uniquely valuable because students may accept criticisms of their work from one another that they would not take seriously if the remarks were offered by a teacher.

We have recorded a podcast, 'Let's Get Digital' (Sheppard and Salt, 2021) and written an article for Future FE Pedagogies, soon to be published. We have also discussed another article for publication in a German online journal publication: 'Ideen-und Innovations-management' (Ideas and Innovation Management) (Gutknecht and Heitmeyer, 2021).

## Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

The growth in impact as illustrated by the data capture in **Appendix 2** shows practitioners within the department working constructively in a new relationship with colleagues and students within and across institutions. As can be seen, there are several comparisons to make between students who were involved in the project (a) and students who were not (b). It is perhaps difficult to draw meaningful comparisons from this data due to the difference in response levels between OTLA and non-OTLA students. However, if we reflect on the information that has been given and assume that (for the non-OTLA students) it represents a significant minority (almost a third) of opinion then this is worth further investigation. Also, as practitioners we can still use the low response numbers as valid opinions that may well represent a larger but 'silent' majority.

All colleagues from the GCSE team at Shipley took part and the letter writing task proved popular. One tutor made a PowerPoint from the resources to use with her groups and another used the exercise as part of her annual observation and received great feedback.

At WFC, the English department is using the OTLA project outcomes and results of surveys to feed into discussions on how they can seek to use a range of canvassing tools and techniques to capture student voice throughout the academic year, and use feedback derived from the learner experience to dynamically respond to needs. Colleagues have been inspired to develop new and adapted TLA methods to motivate students towards higher levels of engagement and achievement and are working closely with the Quality Team to develop college-wide thinking on pedagogy and practice across areas. One particular practice we are reviewing is the use of surveying techniques (learner voice, targeting learning preferences, etc) at common points across the English cohort, and perhaps widening out to other areas.

## Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

The groups have made great progress, attendance and engagement have been moderate or high. One SEND student who has progressed from Entry Level to pre-GCSE and now GCSE has worked with increasing independence and now achieved a grade 4.

The student commented:

*'When the teacher helps us, that's good', 'I like it when we do fun things in class', 'I got to concentrate more this year', 'We do good work'.*

The November re-sit results showed an 80% success rate at Grade 4 or above across both institutions prompting a new direction as the original sample of students left the course upon receiving their result in January 2021.

Learner journeys captured in half-termly ILP reviews at Shipley on Google forms and at WFC using Microsoft Forms have demonstrated positive engagement and feedback from our students. We have evidence from documentation of conversations, anecdotal feedback from students and staff and short interviews which also reflect the positive response from students.

The exchange of ideas between our students led to a wonderful sharing of experiences and a very interesting documentation of the online learning experience during lockdown. Students spoke about their lives and described the places in which they lived; they demonstrated a genuine interest in the unknown student they were writing to.

One student commented:

*"Reading the letters gave a great insight into what it's like for other students. It allowed me to improve my English as it gave me ways to describe my city."*

**Appendix 3** shows examples of peer feedback on the Dracula text, some sample letters exchanged between Shipley and WFC students as well as some samples of Learner Voice as captured in the WFC end of year reflection survey (amongst students who participated throughout the year in the project, including writing letters). It demonstrates our students' understanding of the success criteria required for GCSE English Language.

Four students involved with the OTLA project from start to finish and who completed all the surveys, peer review and letter writing work made the following comments in response to the survey question 'What has helped you most to make progress in English this year?' as follows:

*I've definitely gained more confidence in my reading of different texts and understanding the concept and meaning of new words.*

*Identifying the language techniques and knowing where to put them in my creative writing.*

*The assessments we had helped me in English this year it helped me to have better writing skills and vocabulary.*



## Learning from this project

The collaboration has enabled both tutors to gain considerable insight into student's lives and learning styles which has impacted on how we plan, teach and assess our learners.

One tutor at Shipley said:

*"I've found out so much more about my students that I would never have known."*

Students have responded positively in that they felt staff were making the effort to do something different, to give a real audience and purpose and engage them in learning. One student stayed online to say, *"Miss, I'm really excited about this."* The letter writing has proved to be successful on an unexpected level. The letters form a unique document of life and learning during lockdown. Some students chose to write anonymously but many were happy to sign with a personal name and keen to respond to the letters which had a name attached (**Appendix 3**).

# Appendix 1 - WCF and Shipley: November, December and March survey results

## WFC Data

Results of student surveys conducted in Waltham Forest College at different points within the OTLA project. For WFC, the September 2020 and May 2021 surveys show 73 to 71 total respondents at the time of writing, which equates to over 81% of active students (i.e. those who attended at least two sessions over the year).

Corresponding parallel surveys were also conducted at Shipley College in September 2020 and May/June 2021.

### Live summary links for WFC's surveys can be found below.

Please note – These summary links were available at the time of writing this report. They may or may not be still available.

Sept 2020: [https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS\\_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UMU1CNldSRzhLWUozSjY4UE5DVVBBUFIXRS4u&AnalyzerToken=ml50FGan8RoIP26555FWqk6Ccd8iEG6S](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UMU1CNldSRzhLWUozSjY4UE5DVVBBUFIXRS4u&AnalyzerToken=ml50FGan8RoIP26555FWqk6Ccd8iEG6S)

November 2020: [https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS\\_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UN1U5WVFJUjFZSzBIWkpFV1IRNTQ0WEhNMS4u&AnalyzerToken=ml50FGan8RoIP26555FWqk6Ccd8iEG6S](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UN1U5WVFJUjFZSzBIWkpFV1IRNTQ0WEhNMS4u&AnalyzerToken=ml50FGan8RoIP26555FWqk6Ccd8iEG6S)

December 2020 'end of term reflection':

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS\\_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UNFJYTIIdOUUdKQ1kyVINHUDEyS VI1Tk9TUy4u&AnalyzerToken=nwXxbHO94qSWQ68qp91UEAwiG2FcTBsf](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UNFJYTIIdOUUdKQ1kyVINHUDEyS VI1Tk9TUy4u&AnalyzerToken=nwXxbHO94qSWQ68qp91UEAwiG2FcTBsf)

and [https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS\\_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UQk5CVk5VN1o0TDFMQ1MxSTk5TDIONFIYVC4u&AnalyzerToken=aQXNn8qTTeDSbVdBYWk3WdG8rcbM3iZ1](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UQk5CVk5VN1o0TDFMQ1MxSTk5TDIONFIYVC4u&AnalyzerToken=aQXNn8qTTeDSbVdBYWk3WdG8rcbM3iZ1)

'Online classes continue?' March 2021

16-18s: [https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS\\_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UMEdJRVIKOVoxUDk50TRKUjIXS1NWSjUyQy4u&AnalyzerToken=b1XYghbsl9NdkS5G0i5w3qRKHHJpOHoX](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UMEdJRVIKOVoxUDk50TRKUjIXS1NWSjUyQy4u&AnalyzerToken=b1XYghbsl9NdkS5G0i5w3qRKHHJpOHoX)

Adults: [https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS\\_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UQTVaVDIGT1FWMTQwSEFLQzILQkwxMVFBSS4u&AnalyzerToken=V70jY7SgqLGVUGM563tniA9cEX66wVCL](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UQTVaVDIGT1FWMTQwSEFLQzILQkwxMVFBSS4u&AnalyzerToken=V70jY7SgqLGVUGM563tniA9cEX66wVCL)

May 2021: [https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS\\_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UNjRGVFRFSDhSQ1ZJVFc5Q0pERjU5RjZENC4u&AnalyzerToken=pb1SRpa9Cdjucuf8vOmHtZyferPqhPNAI](https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?id=9gm-k0xFZUi23IK8MggS_A4cSOSgs2dHvMdjE7DZ2L9UNjRGVFRFSDhSQ1ZJVFc5Q0pERjU5RjZENC4u&AnalyzerToken=pb1SRpa9Cdjucuf8vOmHtZyferPqhPNAI)

## Sample screenshots

### WFC GCSE English Language September 2020: initial survey [73 respondents]

1. How will you access online learning for GCSE English? (select all that apply)

[More Details](#)

PC or laptop	50
Tablet	2
Phone	43
Ipad	11
Other device(s)	1



2. On a scale of 1 to 5, how do you feel about studying online?

[More Details](#)

1: Not confident, haven't done...	12
2	11
3	25
4	15
5: Very confident, it's helped ...	10



3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how do you feel about studying GCSE English?

[More Details](#)

1: Not very confident or intere...	3
2	5
3	23
4	18
5: Quite confident and plannin...	24



4. What do you need to improve your performance in the subject? (select all that apply)

[More Details](#)

I need to practise reading diff...	31
I need to develop my creative ...	47
I need help with how to answe...	44
I want to develop more confid...	46
I need to develop more detail ...	45



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5. Would you be happy to work in a pair or small group? (select all that apply)

[More Details](#)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> In class	38
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Online	23
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Either	27
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Not sure	11



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6. What would help you make progress this year?

[More Details](#)

72  
Responses

Latest Responses

*"To get some past papers so i can trymy best to pass"*

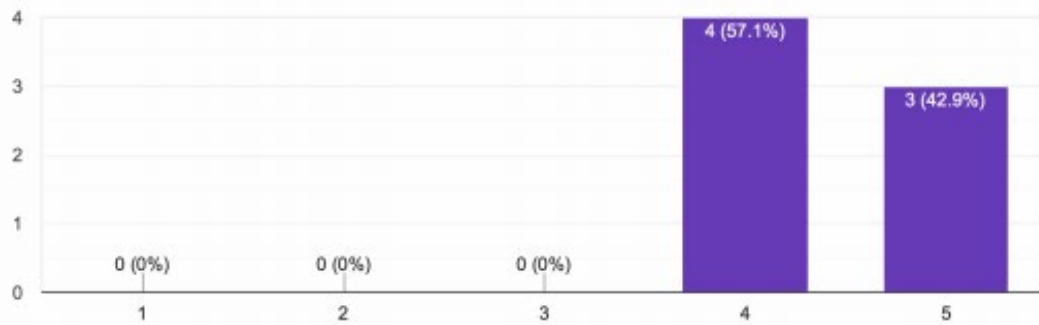
*"I'm class lessons as the atmosphere will be more direct "*

*"I need to read more books and stories in order to increase my confid..."*

## Shipleigh data

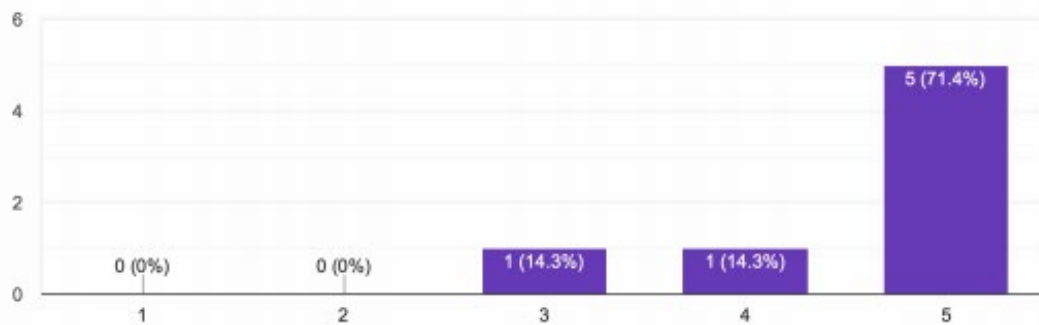
How do you feel about your progress this year?

7 responses



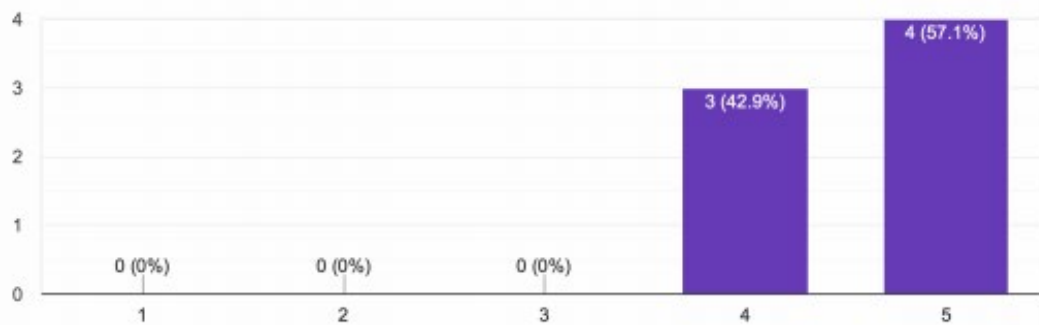
How do you feel you have developed your reading skills?

7 responses



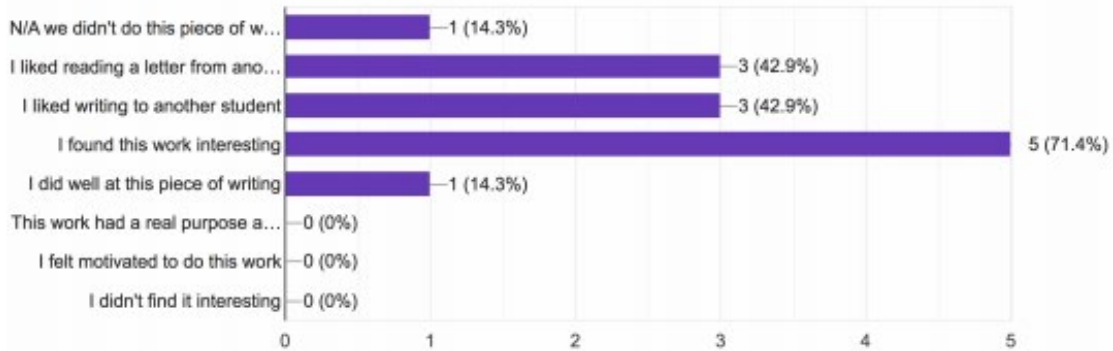
How do you feel you have developed your writing skills?

7 responses



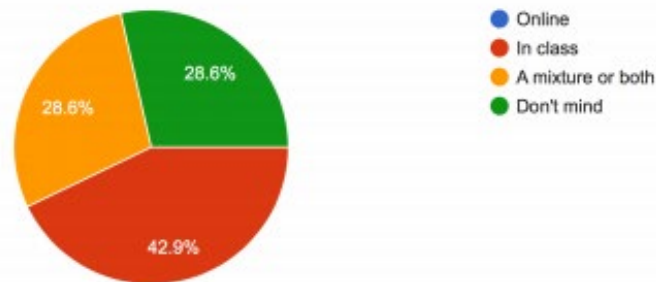
Did you read a letter from a student in London? Please tick all that apply

7 responses



Do you prefer to work online or in class?

7 responses



The most that helped me this year was that, I was able to concentrate and focus more better. My tutor did help me a lot better than last year how to understand the way English is as a work. Getting help from the teachers and by reading texts like Dracula and tell tale heart and by that I was better at writing stories.

My teacher, Doing revision at home, Paying more attention in lessons

The thing that has helped me make progress in english this year is ive had a lot of work to do and it has given me a lot of confidence in my writing skills.

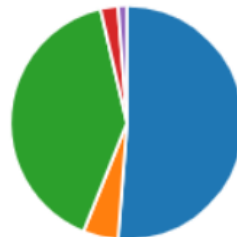
I have made a lot of progress in my writing this year and feel confident

## WFC GCSE English Language November 2020: follow up survey [63 respondents]

1. How do you currently access online learning for GCSE English? (select all that apply)

[More Details](#)

PC or laptop	42
Tablet	4
Phone	33
Ipad	2
Other device(s)	1



2. On a scale of 1 to 5, how do you now feel about studying online?

[More Details](#)

1: Still not confident, haven't d...	8
2	5
3	21
4	20
5: Very confident, it's helping ...	9



3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how do you feel at this point about GCSE English?

[More Details](#)

1: Still not very confident or in...	2
2	6
3	20
4	25
5: Quite confident and want t...	10



4. What do you now feel you need to improve in the subject? (select all that apply)

[More Details](#)

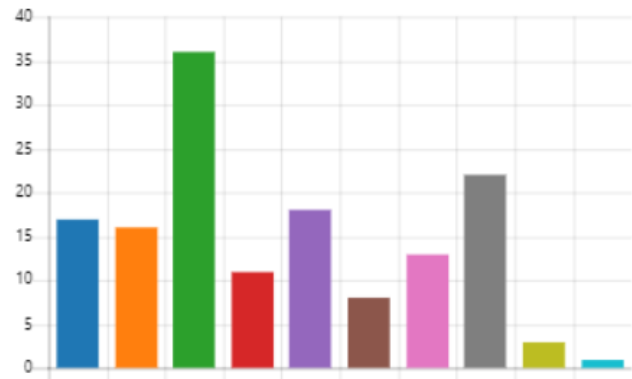
I still need to practise reading ...	20
I still need to develop my crea...	37
I still need help with how to a...	30
I still want to develop more co...	34
I still need to develop more d...	45



5. Which methods do you feel have helped you improve in the subject? (select all that apply)

[More Details](#)

- Shorter lessons with follow up... 17
- Accessing online classes 16
- Face to face sessions 36
- Face to face sessions with acc... 11
- Assignments set on Teams 18
- Accessing recorded sessions a... 8
- The mix of face to face and on... 13
- Being able to message my tea... 22
- None of these: I'd prefer long... 3
- None mentioned above (pleas... 1





## WFC GCSE English Language 2020: end of term reflection [December term—small group sample (online)]

1. Do you feel you have made progress in GCSE English Language since September?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	9
● No	0
● A bit	9



2. What have you liked about the GCSE English sessions?

[More Details](#)

18  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Learning"

"That the lessons happen online and in class which helps me with lear...

"Learning about some new things and recapping things which i have f...

3. What have you disliked about the GCSE English sessions?

[More Details](#)

18  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Nothing"

"There is no such thing that I dont like "

"...Can't really think of anything."

4. Comparing the Sept and Nov surveys, some students felt more confident about studying online but less confident about GCSE English. Why do you think this could be?

[More Details](#)

18  
Responses

Latest Responses

"I don't know"

"Because some students don't practice hoe to write the question beca...

"Online you speak students listen if they don't know something they d...

5. What can you do to help yourself make progress in 2021?

[More Details](#)

18  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Attend more"

"Study hard practice questions ask the teacher for help if needed "

"See module answers. "

6. What can your teacher do to help you make progress in 2021?

[More Details](#)

18  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Nothing"

" Help me if I have any questions or i done a question wrong to help ...

"Go over module answers and pick up the very good once and just ex...

7. Would you be interested in attending a weekly writing skills session? This would be in addition to your timetabled hours.

[More Details](#)

● Yes	4
● No	12
● Other	2



## WFC GCSE English Language 2020: end of term reflection [December term—small group sample (paper based)]

1. Do you feel you have made progress in GCSE English Language since September?

● Yes	14
● No	3
● A bit	13



2. What have you liked about the GCSE English sessions?

30  
Responses

Latest Responses

*"A lot of practice for homework as well as in class. Very informative les...*

*"I have enjoyed looking at different pieces of text and videos. Matthew ...*

*"Every session we learn more things. Lessons are very interesting (not ...*

3. What have you disliked about the GCSE English sessions?

30  
Responses

Latest Responses

"N/A"

*"Disliked the timing of mock exams, after a long day at work, I do not ...*

*"Nothing really- that I can think about. Subjects chosen by the teacher...*

4. Comparing the Sept and Nov surveys, some students felt more confident about studying online but less confident about GCSE English. Why do you think this could be?

30  
Responses

Latest Responses

*"This could be a fear of exams."*

*"More comfortable and confident in their own home. Perform better w...*

*"I personally don't feel confident about studying online, as I prefer hu...*

5. What can you do to help yourself make progress in 2021?

30  
Responses

Latest Responses

*"To keep practicing! Focus more when doing exercises To avoid silly mi...*

*"Manage workload more efficiently. "*

*"Attend regularly. Try my best."*

6. What can your teacher do to help you make progress in 2021?

30  
Responses

Latest Responses

*"Keep providing practice questions and activities in class."*

*"Matthew is doing a great job. Keep up the good work!"*

*"Same thing, we are doing now, keep analysing different texts from dif..."*

7. Would you be interested in attending a weekly writing skills session? This would be in addition to your timetabled hours.

● Yes 16  
● No 14



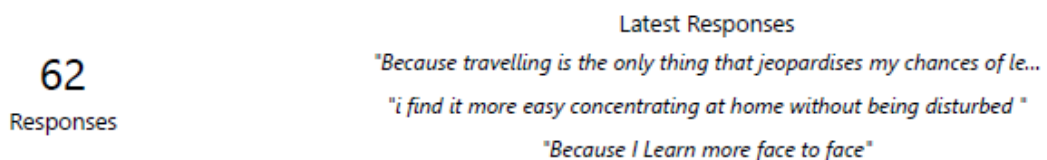
## 'Online classes continue?' March 2021

16-18s [62 respondents]:

1. A significant number of my classes want to continue the online sessions from 8 March onwards, instead of returning to face-to-face sessions in college. Would you prefer to continue online classes as well?



2. If you answered 'yes', please explain why you prefer online sessions. If you answered 'no', please explain why you prefer face-to-face sessions.



3. For face-to-face sessions, would you prefer the same start time every week?



Adults [15 respondents]:

1. A large majority of the class wants to continue the online sessions from 9 March, instead of returning to face-to-face sessions in college. Would you prefer to continue online classes as well?



2. If you answered 'yes', please explain why you prefer online sessions. If you answered 'no', please explain why you prefer face-to-face sessions.

15 Responses

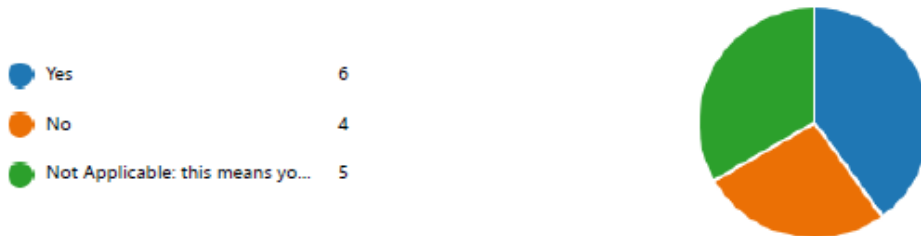
Latest Responses

*"Learn better when working at home, I am able to attend all classes w..."*

*"Easier for childcare purposes "*

*"Online classes just fit in when working. It's easier! However, I can still ..."*

3. If you prefer face-to-face sessions, would you be able to start at 7.30pm and finish around 9pm?



## WFC final reflection survey [May/June 2021]

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how do you feel about your progress this year?

1: Not very confident	5
2	5
3	18
4	29
5: Happy, I've worked well and...	14



2. On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel you have developed your reading skills?

1: I still find reading difficult a...	1
2	5
3	17
4	31
5: I've made good progress an...	17



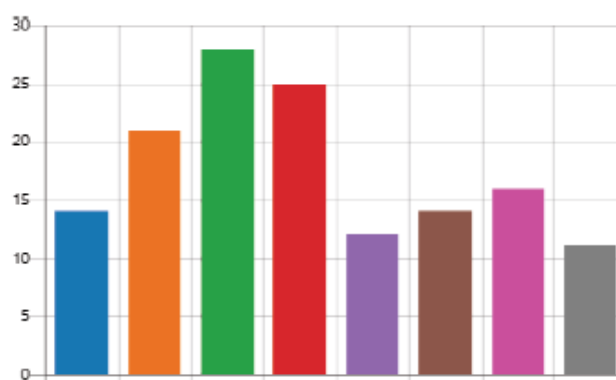
3. On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel you have developed your writing skills?

1: I still find writing difficult an...	2
2	2
3	20
4	35
5: I feel confident writing, and ...	12



4. Did you write and/or respond to a letter from a student in Shipley College? (select all that apply)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> N/A: we didn't do this piece of...	14
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> I liked reading a letter from an...	21
<span style="color: green;">●</span> I liked writing to another stud...	28
<span style="color: red;">●</span> I found this work interesting	25
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> I did well at this piece of writing	12
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> This work had a real purpose ...	14
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> I felt motivated to do this work	16
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> I didn't find the letters/the wo...	11



5. Are you happy for your letter to be published as part of the project?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Yes	41
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> No	14
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Not Applicable	16



6. Do you prefer to work online or in class for this subject?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> In class	36
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Online	10
<span style="color: green;">●</span> A mixture of both	18
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Don't mind	6
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Not sure	1



7. What has helped you most to make progress in English this year? Please give as much detail as you can.

71  
Responses

Latest Responses

*"I feel like my reading skills improves abit more and understanding text"*

*"The freedom of being in college instead of being forced to do things a..."*

*"The new writing technique we learn."*



## Appendix 2 - WCF survey results

The following shows results of the final reflection survey for students who took part in the project (one practitioner's students at WFC) and results from other practitioners' students at WFC who did not take part. The questions between the two surveys differ because of the letter writing component, but five of the same questions were mirrored across both sets of students. Unfortunately, the department-wide survey only managed 100 responses at the time of writing, which equates to only around 30% of total active student's views.

Question comparisons and results are shown as OTLA student's replies, and wider English department student replies, as follows:

### OTLA students:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how do you feel about your progress this year?

● 1: Not very confident	5
● 2	5
● 3	18
● 4	29
● 5: Happy, I've worked well and...	14



### WFC students (non-OTLA):

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how do you feel about your progress this year?

● 1: Not very confident	4
● 2	2
● 3	26
● 4	32
● 5: Happy, I've worked well and...	36



## OTLA students:

2. On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel you have developed your reading skills?

1: I still find reading difficult a...	1
2	5
3	17
4	31
5: I've made good progress an...	17



3. On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel you have developed your writing skills?

1: I still find writing difficult an...	2
2	2
3	20
4	35
5: I feel confident writing, and ...	12



## WFC students (non-OTLA):

2. On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel you have developed your reading skills?

1: I still find reading difficult a...	1
2	2
3	22
4	40
5: I've made good progress an...	35



3. On a scale of 1-5, how do you feel you have developed your writing skills?

1: I still find writing difficult an...	2
2	4
3	27
4	46
5: I feel confident writing, and ...	21



From the questions 2 and 3 respondents across both sets of students we could say there are a similar percentage of students who feel they have progressed more so in their reading skills than their writing. However, the low number of total respondents from non-OTLA students makes it difficult to directly compare the statistics (i.e.

around 81% of OTLA students responded to the survey versus around 30% of non-OTLA students).

### OTLA students:

6. Do you prefer to work online or in class for this subject?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> In class	36
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Online	10
<span style="color: green;">●</span> A mixture of both	18
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Don't mind	6
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Not sure	1



### WFC students (non-OTLA):

4. Do you prefer to work online or in class for this subject?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> In class	35
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Online	13
<span style="color: green;">●</span> A mixture of both	36
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Don't mind	11
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Not sure	5



Interestingly, 32% of OTLA students preferred to study GCSE English either via a mixture of face-to-face/online learning (or didn't mind) versus 47% of non-OTLA students. As we can see above, there is a significant (though small) majority of students who preferred face-to-face sessions from the OTLA group (51%) against 35% from the rest of the department.

## Appendix 3 – Samples of student’s work and peer review

### Sample WFC/Shipleby student’s work and feedback (peer review)

#### Sample A

4. In this extract, there is an attempt to create an atmosphere of dread. Evaluate how successfully this is achieved.

Support your views with reference to the text.

Question 4: The writer does create an atmosphere of dread. At the start of the text the reader gives us mixed feelings because he says “I saw the count’s head coming out from the window” which gives us a sense of dread because we want to know what’s going to happen next but then the writer then starts using happy words ‘wonderful’ and ‘amused’ so this takes all the dread away. Then straight away all that dread comes back because the writer has gone from “wonderful how small a matter will interest and amuse a man when he is a prisoner” to “But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror” by changing the atmosphere will keep the reader very entertained.

In the middle of the text the writer uses long sentences to describe what he is seeing which is causing dread for the reader because the reader just wants to know what’s going to happen next. The writer then describes the count as a “lizard” which makes the reader think it is actually a human? Or a creature? This creates even more dread and fear because we don’t know what this “lizard” could do.

#### WFC student feedback:

*I think this response is good, for the student has used some quotations to support his statement, but to make it even better these are some improvements that I would do:*

*He could use the sentence ‘At first I could not believe my eyes’ to show that he was in a state, shock, panic so that for him that was something unreal.*

*In my opinion, I think that JW’s response was detailed quite nicely by including a couple of quotes for example*

*In my opinion, I feel as if JW evidence is a much stronger piece and more detailed because he goes straight to the point in detail of how the writer is subconsciously feeling. In addition, he uses more quotes to back up his point.*

## Sample B

4. In this extract, there is an attempt to create an atmosphere of dread. Evaluate how successfully this is achieved.

Support your views with reference to the text.

*\* use a different start for example "In the extract given the writer..."*

**Question 4:** The writer does create an atmosphere of dread. At the start of the text the reader gives us mixed feelings because he says "I saw the count's head coming out from the window" which gives us a sense of dread because we want to know what's going to happen next but then the writer then starts using happy words 'wonderful' and 'amused' so this takes all the dread away. Then straight away all that dread comes back because the writer has gone from "wonderful how small a matter will interest and amuse a man when he is a prisoner" to "But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror" by changing the atmosphere will keep the reader very entertained.

*expand vocab completely & appreciation*

*"Phrases" "express" verb adjective noun*

*explain how the writer changes the mood & tone.*

*expand this idea. use correct term.*

In the middle of the text the writer uses long sentences to describe what he is seeing which is causing dread for the reader because the reader just wants to know what's going to happen next. The writer then describes the count as a "lizard" which makes the reader think it is actually a human? Or a creature? This creates even more dread and fear because we don't know what this "lizard" could do.

- ⊗ It's a good start you just need to expand your vocabulary and other ideas.
- ⊗ You stated some parts but didn't extend just re read what we written and add in bits and pieces you need to.

## Sample C

Question 4: The writer does create an atmosphere of dread. At the start of the text the reader gives us mixed feelings because he says "I saw the count's head coming out from the window" which gives us a sense of dread because we want to know what's going to happen next but then the writer then starts using happy words 'wonderful' and 'amused' so this takes all the dread away. Then straight away all that dread comes back because the writer has gone from "wonderful how small a matter will interest and amuse a man when he is a prisoner" to "But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror" by changing the atmosphere will keep the reader very entertained.

In the middle of the text the writer uses long sentences to describe what he is seeing which is causing dread for the reader because the reader just wants to know what's going to happen next. The writer then describes the count as a "lizard" which makes the reader think it is actually a human? Or a creature? This creates even more dread and fear because we don't know what this "lizard" could do.

When the writer is describing the lizard part he/she could of added more to it like:

"because we don't know what this lizard <sup>could do</sup> ~~is~~ doing something like, he could do this or that some examples of what he could do.

## Sample D

Never start a sentence with 'I think'  
→ expand vocabulary

I think the writer is successful at his attempt to create an atmosphere of dread because he writes about how the narrator feels about the Count. An interesting part of the text is in the first paragraph where the writer says "but my feelings changed to repulsion and terror". This conveys that the narrator suddenly starts to feel scared and worried when he sees the Count. This makes the reader feel worried and frightened. Expand your point "how"

Another interesting part of the text is in the last sentence of the text where the writer says "I am encompassed about with terrors". This amplifies that the narrator is feeling surrounded by terror. This makes the reader feel foreboding and scared because of the tense setting.

use a better adjective  
\*worry  
\*anxious

expand this describe the setting.

## Sample letter exchanges between WFC and Shipley students

A Shipley College Student  
C/O Shipley College English Dept.,  
Salt Building, Victoria Rd,  
Shipley,  
Saltaire,  
BD18 3LQ

11 February 2021

Dear College Student

I just thought I should write to you and introduce my self to you. Well hello -- I'm 17 years of age nearly 18.

I currently live in London but I used to live in Somerset. The bit of London that I live in is North East London specifically the borough of Waltham Forest. And the bit of Somerset that I used to live in specifically was Taunton.

Well in life I have many things I dislike and many things that I like for example I dislike people that talk about their friends behind their backs but there are also many things I do like ice skating. When I finish college I am hoping to join the army but if not I will join the police which will require going university.

My education experiences have been quite boring but very educating. I went to secondary school for 5 years and ended with no grades due to my mental health going down hill drastically. I am also going to college for 4-5 years. My opinion on studying English is that it is one of my stronger subjects but it is not one of my favourite subjects.

I hope to hear from you soon and I look forward to meeting you in person.

Yours faithfully

CL



Waltham Forest College  
707 Forest Road  
Walthamstow  
London E17 4JB



25th february 2021

Dear CL

Hi i'm Abigail i go to Shipleigh college, i'm 17 but turn 18 in about 2 weeks. I am part Irish this comes from my mom's side. I live with my mum and my older brother, we live in a little town called Keighley near Bradford. I have lived in keighley my whole life.

Keighley is a nice place to live but not much to do round here, whenever you want to do something you always have to travel to other places which is annoying, but I love living here. We have beautiful countryside all around us, my favourite is Haworth moors.

I am currently studying health and social care in the hopes of going to university and studying children's nursing. I support Bradford City and I am an amatuer boxer. I have never been out of the UK but would love to travel at some point. The first place i would like to go is Ireland then maybe go places with a bit more sun.

I wanted to go into the army as a medic, I had done all my interviews but sadly wasn't allowed to for medical reasons. But both the army and police are great choices for a carer. I also don't like 'friends' who talk about friends behind their back it's so two faced and I have had it happen to me many times. I left secondary school with a couple of gcse's due to the same reason as you. I however do not like english at all unless we get to do story's and things that bring out the creative side of me.

Are you into any sports, if so what are they. What are your goals (if you have made some) for this year. What kind of movies and tv shows do you like? What are you studying at the moment?

I hope to hear from you and possibly keep these letters going.

Yours faithfully  
Abigail H

A Shipley College Student  
C/O Shipley College English Dept.,  
Salt Building, Victoria Rd,  
Shipley,  
Saltaire,  
BD18 3LQ

[10/02/2021]

RE: Introductions

Dear student

Hello I am a student studying in Waltham forest college I am a 17 year old student studying hair and beauty originally I am from Lithuania but I live in london for 17 years

I live in East London more specifically in leyton my area is really busy all the time cars/buses going there is alot of shops around that people could go and shop

I really enjoyed doing art in secondary so I decided to do beauty in college because it is to do with art what I do really dislike is doing maths because maths is not my strongest subject my plans for future are to become a hairdresser and a makeup artist and open my own salon

My learning experience in GCSE English is very good I think English Language is really helpful for students knowing and learning English the teachers at waltham forest college are awesome I am glad I do GCSE English to improve my English

Do u have a future plan if so what is it and why you chose that specific subject?

Thank you

Yours faithfully,

GA

Dear GA

Hi my name is Ellie , I am 16 year old and I am a student at Shipley College. I study Travel and Tourism level 2 as well as resitting my English and Maths. This is my first year in college, nearly my second .

I study in Saltaire , which is an area in Bradford in West Yorkshire England. It is named after Sir Titus Salt who built a textile mill , known as Salts Mill and he built buildings where Shipley College is now and where I study my course. Saltaire Village was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2001.

I live in Bradford, which is a town on the rise. It's just a few kilometres from Leeds and Manchester , it is known for having the best curries in the United Kingdom , it is a multicultural city. The city offers affordable housing , good schools , and a great outdoor scene , making it an appealing choice for families too. My point of view on Bradford is that it is a good place to live but when i am older I don't want to live in Bradford.

Did you know? - In Bradford we have a family-friendly city centre with an award-winning city park.

Did you know ? - Sir Titus Salt didn't want any pubs because he didn't want his workers to drink alcohol. There are now several pubs in the village including one at the side of the canal near the park.

At the moment at Shipley College I am studying Travel and Tourism , it is a really interesting course you learn all sorts you never knew before . Such as different airlines , airports , job opportunities , tour operators , hotels and tourist boards. I really enjoy studying the course and the teachers are so lovely and helpful.

I am actually thinking about changing my course next year to childcare , to go work with young kids or disabled kids because I have studied Travel and Tourism and I don't think that it's the job I wanted to do , but I studied to have something behind me if I ever wanted to do the job I planned.

My plan moving forward is to finish the course I am studying in June time and try to pass my maths and English get my certificate for level 2 Travel and Tourism and have this behind me in case I choose to ever want to work in the travel industry and then change my course completely. I would like to get an apprenticeship working with young kids/disabled kids. I would like to do this job

because I have experience with having a disabled sister and I like working with young kids.

How long have you been studying your course for?

What are your future plans?

Yours Faithfully,

Ellie T

12/02/2021

RE: Introductions

Dear Students of Shipley College,

I am writing to you as both your teacher and our teacher have put in an effort to create a kind of link where students of Shipley College and Waltham Forest College exchange work in different forms as we have previously sent a summary and this time you will receive it as a letter. My name is Muhammad Adnan Saeed, born in the UK but raised in multiple countries, from my name you must have already figured that I am a Muslim and addition to that my ethnicity is British – Asian(Pakistani).

My permanent residence has always been in east London but I have lived in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. They both differ from here a lot but mostly because of religious ways. I have also been to Turkey and Dubai which are both beautiful but I wouldn't want to ruin the experience for you. Fun fact: I have been to 2 other countries but I was too young to remember them but the countries I visited were Egypt and Scotland.

I usually tell people that if there was to be one love of my life it would be Football but I am good at a lot of other sports as well e.g. Basketball, Field Hockey, Cricket etc. Calling it a game is an understatement and if you don't know what I'm talking about I was referring to Chess which is a game that requires a lot of brains. I have spent more than half of my life in a boarding school where I believe I have learnt and experienced so much more than I could've being a public school student and if I had to choose between living all those years again or living the life of a normal public school student I would choose that again.

My thoughts about the subject we have in common are that it develops our skills in a very creative and organised way. I unfortunately have to do it as my grades haven't been converted from the secondary school qualifications I have received but it truly has added a lot to my knowledge and has taught me new ways of solving problems.

I have provided you with a good amount of information on myself so if you have any questions you would like to ask me, be free to ask.

Thanks for taking the time for reading my letter and hopefully you reply back.

Yours faithfully,

Muhammad Adnan Saeed

4 of march 2021

RE: introductions

Dear Muhammad Adnan Saeed,

I am writing to you because our colleges wanted us to send letters to each other. Lo and behold my teacher gave me your letter to read and respond to. Hello I am Connor. I was born in the UK too. You probably can tell by name that I am Irish catholic.

I have always lived in the UK however I have moved around two times do however i currently live in Bradford. Bradford is a very different place to places you have lived in before for example most of Bradford is not a very nice place to live especially where i live in Bradford. In fact you would be lucky if you walked ten minutes without seeing rubbish on the floor or some gang related graffiti on a shop's window. Fun Fact about 1000 crimes are reported daily in Bradford. Also I heard that London also has an incredibly high crime rate. Maybe you could tell me about the high crime rates in your city. However Bradford may be infected and covered in festering wounds I would not have it any other way. I would rather be scared than be null and safe.

Speaking of null and safe, how was boarding school Muhammad? I would like to tell me a bit more of your experience there. But that's my idea of a boarding school. A lot of people are placed in dorms safe from the outside world and never challenged ideologically all conforming because of the threat of expulsion. Maybe boarding school is not as santised as I think it is?

I may not be good at a vast amount of sports and a game called Chess that you mentioned in your letter however i don't play. However what i do choose to try and

master i become very intent on trying to be the best at it. Like my need to disassemble anything that uses a battery and try to put it back together and the same goes with books and movies however when i take apart a text i don't use a hammer but a pen. One of the best feelings of my life was when I fixed an old broken gameboy where as most people would have seen it as outdated and sent it away to be destroyed. You may have been to a boarding school however I think that you can find more answers in old technology then any book can give you but what do you think about that?

However i do think that's all i have to about what you have told me but i would genuinely like to

Know what boarding school is like for someone who has been to one. I would also like to learn more about your travels to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia because my understanding of these countries is weak at best and would like to hear more about your experiences in those countries.

Yours sincerely,

Connor

## Samples of Learner Voice from the WFC survey

These four students were involved with the OTLA project from start to finish and completed all the surveys, peer review and letter writing work.

The survey question was 'What has helped you most to make progress in English this year?'

*I've definitely gained more confidence in my reading of different texts and understanding the concept and meaning of new words.*

*Identifying the language techniques and knowing where to put them in my creative writing*

*The assessments we had helped me in English this year it helped me to have better writing skills and vocabulary.*

*Inspiration from my teacher and other students.*

**Shipleigh context:** Last year, the Level 2 Business Studies class was identified as a cause for concern. No students achieved a grade 4. There was a poor work ethic and low level disruption in class. This year, students have achieved significantly better. The attitude to learning is positive as shown by responses above and students feel that they have made progress.

### The questions

Shipleigh College allowed students to identify and judge for themselves their progress, confidence and skill level. They were also empowered with active statements such as 'I need to practise ..'

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Total	Grade	Attendance	Engagement
18	24	30	23	95	5	moderate	moderate
12	22	23	18	75	3	moderate	moderate
12	25	30	24	91	4	moderate	high
16	25	31	25	97	5	high	high
14	25	27	21	87	4	moderate	high
12	20	27	19	78	3	moderate	moderate
11	19	6	14	50	2	moderate	moderate
13	23	27	21	84	4	high	high

The group has made great progress, attendance and engagement have been moderate or high. One SEND student who has progressed from Entry Level to pre-GCSE and now GCSE has worked with increasing independence and now achieved a grade 4. I asked students what helped them learn and as well as the written answers given above they told me informally, 'When the teacher helps us, that's good', 'I like it when we do fun things in class', 'I got to concentrate more this year', 'We do good work'.

We also invited Matt Gordon to our online class and our students interviewed him and gave their views. They asked him questions such as *'What do you think of Northerners?'* and *'If there was no covid, would you still want online lessons?'* They reported that they had enjoyed online classes as they had personal space and felt they got more done but also that they like face to face as they are motivated by other students in class, learn better and there are no network problems.

Aleeza said she had found the letter exchange between the two colleges 'fun and interactive' and Abi said 'The letter we did, I absolutely loved it - speaking to someone the same age and getting a connection and a reply, it intrigued me. We learnt life skills and it went towards English.' Another student added 'Reading the letters gave a great insight into what its like for other students. It allowed me to improve my English as it gave me ways to describe my city.' Aleeza and Abi were very positive about the cross college collaboration and communicating with people they didn't know. 'We got confidence from meeting other people'. Naheem and Aleeza discussed the letter writing task. Naheem said he had 'enjoyed it and told his mum'. Aleeza added 'Its like connecting to older times when people didn't have a phone'. Naheem replied, 'Its more powerful with a letter, you can describe your emotions more'.

This type of reflective communication and peer support which has been prompted by the Action Research has created good peer mentoring and support which has also empowered students to take initiative in their learning.

Shipleigh College Students also expressed an appreciation to me afterwards that I had 'made the effort to do stuff'. I think this has proved to be important with all the groups that we have worked with in both colleges - in a year of lockdown, students have gained a new appreciation of their classes as a chance to communicate, learn something and make new connections. More than ever, students have said 'thanks Miss' and 'How are you?' as the replacement of a register with an online 'check-in and chat' has build relationships. Students have had a positive response to the idea that tutors have collaborated. Aleeza: 'I think we have benefited from teachers collaboration'. Throughout the year Matt and I have continued to ask the students to reflect on their learning and complete the short ILP google forms as part of the Action Research. This has enabled us to respond to their views, gain feedback on what is working and what is having less of an impact and most importantly for me it has placed the student voice at the centre of our work together.



## Appendix 4 – The project team

Project Role	Name	Job Role
Project Lead	Matt Gordon	Advanced Practitioner (WFC)
	Jan Calvert	Advanced Practitioner (Shipleigh College)
Project team	Alex Hill	Teacher (Shipleigh College)
	Julie Coleman	Teacher (Shipleigh College)
	Corrine Pollard	Teacher (Shipleigh College)
	Rob Reid	Teacher (Shipleigh College)
	Marianne Benson	Teacher (Shipleigh College)
	Stacey Stevens	Teacher (Shipleigh College)
	Omur Derelikoylu	HOD English/ Prince's Trust (WFC)
	Melanie Baskin	Teacher (WFC)
	Julie Wilson	Teacher (WFC)
	Shaziya Uddin	Teacher (WFC)
	Mustafa Vanancio	Teacher (WFC)
Project Mentor	Sue Southwood (ccConsultancy)	
Research Group Lead	Claire Callow (ccConsultancy)	

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This programme is funded by the Department for Education.

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