

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

**FINAL REPORT ON THE OTLA PHASE 7 (ENGLISH) PROJECT –
DEVELOPING WRITING
Sheffield Lifelong Learning**

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

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



CLAIRE COLLINS
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Final report - Developing Writing

Sheffield Lifelong Learning

This project aimed to address the disconnect between the speaking and writing skills of many of our adult learners, particularly those from an ESOL background. The project enabled them to use innate grammar instincts, gained from their everyday use and experience of spoken English, to build stronger, clearer sentences on the page.

Summary

As a community learning provider seeking to furnish adults with full Functional Skills qualifications, we have recognised a pattern of learners achieving success in the speaking and listening and reading elements of a course, who struggle to reach the equivalent level in writing. This has led learners to lose confidence in themselves and in the exam process and has, on occasion, threatened to derail their progress altogether. This pattern has also been recognised within our organisation's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision. This project offered an opportunity to target specific issues with sentence construction that frequently frustrated Level 1 and Level 2 learners. It was further anticipated that the principles could then be adapted for learners in different contexts, including 16-18 study programmes (including Special Educational Needs (SEND)), family and community learning, adult programmes and apprenticeships.

Rationale

Adult learners are often expert jugglers, balancing the demands of study with the responsibilities associated with families, jobs and being part of their communities. During a typical week they may often converse in English, they will sometimes read, but they rarely write. This, inevitably, leads to a 'spiky profile', which in turn creates difficulties for learners and teachers alike, particularly when they join an accredited course. Too often teachers see confidence wane and impetus disappear as the familiar refrain of "I'm just no good at writing!" echoes around the classroom. In an effort to tackle this, the project aimed to develop a 'back-to-basics' approach to grammar, that would enable a deeper understanding of the grammatical tools used to build a strong sentence. The idea was for learners to take sentences apart, in order to better understand how they work grammatically, and then to create their own clauses, sentences and paragraphs in a free writing context, where they could begin to enjoy writing creatively, skilfully and with greater confidence. This concept quickly evolved into an approach that could harness the fact that many learners express themselves more accurately vocally than on paper. This innate grammar resource, developed from years of everyday linguistic exchange in a variety of contexts, needed to be formally acknowledged and ruthlessly exploited to help learners more confidently recognise and correct mistakes in their writing by reading out loud. Those areas that remained uncorrected could then be targeted with

specific, pedagogical support. This approach became known as using 'grammar ears'.

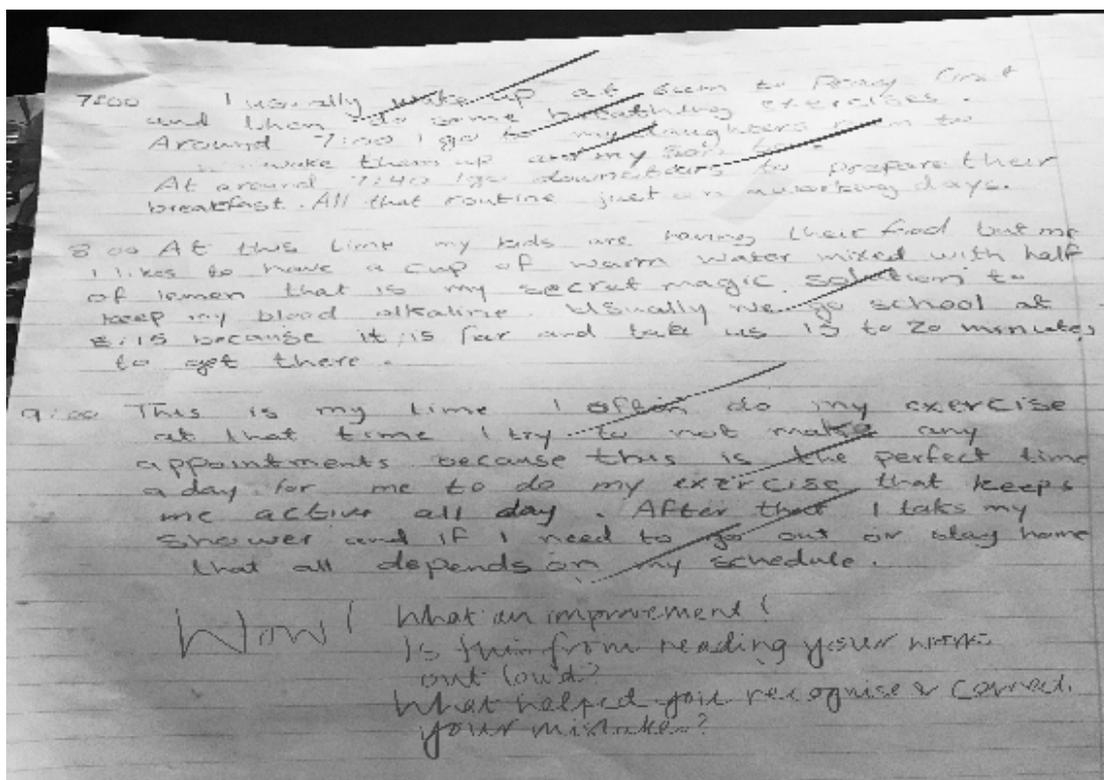
Approach

We first designed an online course that would explore this approach with a group of learners in a writing for employability and study skills context. Although these learners had passed Level 2, their writing skill and confidence was somewhat shaky, due to a learning experience that was disrupted by the pandemic. Based on discussion with the learners, we agreed that the writing would have a broadly autobiographical theme and would encompass a range of different text types. The course was delivered on Zoom and designed with two phases.

In the first phase, early tasks were collaborative and learners produced a written text which was then read out to the rest of the group. Learners were encouraged to focus on listening for grammar mistakes in each other's work, emphasising the idea that learners hear more mistakes than they see. Written work was assessed for grammar alone and mistakes were highlighted in pink, but not corrected. This reinforced the focus on self-correction and grammatical self-reliance. The teacher began to build a profile of the needs of individual learners, noting those mistakes that some learners simply couldn't hear or see. These were then addressed in Phase Two.

Before and after using 'grammar ears'.

A Day In My House	
7:00	I usually wakes up at 6am to pray first and then do some breathing exercises Around 7:00 I go to my daughters room to waking them up and wakes my son up to .At around 7:40 I go downstairs to prepares their breakfast .All this routine just on a working days.
8:00	At this time my kids are having their food but me just likes to have a cup of Warm water mixed with half of lemon that is my secret magic solution to wakes up my body and keeps my blood alkaline.Usually we go to school at 8:15 because my kids school far it takes me 15 to 20 minutes to get there .
9:00	This is my time I often do my exercise at that time I try to not make any appointments because this is the perfect time to do my exercise that keeps me active all day after that I takes my shower and then if I go out or stay home is that depends on my schedule.
10:00	



Phase Two employed online delivery we dubbed 'bending', rather than flipping the classroom. Once vocalisation had determined individual grammar issues - for instance subject-verb agreement, or use of the definite article - learners were expected to independently re-visit their learning and understanding of grammar rules through homework exercises, using self-marking, online resources. Following this, learners completed creative writing tasks designed to use the particular grammar rule studied. Work was drafted at home then posted on Google Classroom, so it could be 'brought to class' on Zoom, where it was shared and discussed. Learners were then expected to respond by producing a final, corrected version for marking.

The practices from this course were also embedded in Functional Skills learning at Level 1 and Level 2 and used with individuals in online tutorials.

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

George Bernard Shaw said "Progress is impossible without change", but this year has been one in which changes in teaching, learning and assessment have been an educational necessity, as well as a choice. However, our learners quickly adapted to the Zoom classroom and engaged enthusiastically with lockdown lessons on screen. We were reminded of the important sense of community that is created by learning together.

The initial premise had been to find a 'system' that would help 'fix' the stubborn grammar issues that so frustrated our learners and tutors alike. However, we soon learnt that there was no instant solution, or quick fix that could be imposed, rather a more organic process was required, that grew and developed to meet the needs of

the learners. Good, active listening was key to this from the outset. The approach was informed and guided by listening to the learners, but also focused on them listening closely to each other's writing and, ultimately, listening to their own sentences. It was good to be reminded that true listening creates focus and encourages thought and reflection, which in turn builds academic confidence.

It was also good to be reminded of the joy of writing without so many of the constraints we so frequently experience in accredited learning. Giving learners the liberty to tell their own stories, to use language freely, not to worry about spelling and punctuation, unleashed unexpected creativity and depth in their writing. Asking learners to trust their aural memories, their innate grammar knowledge and instincts and asking them to look to themselves, rather than the teacher, felt counter-intuitive. So too, did highlighting any written errors and then returning work ungraded and uncorrected, but it was revolutionary in giving them ownership of the improvement of their writing. They were released from being focused on a test and could concentrate on what it really means to be 'good' at English – to be a clear, confident, yet empathetic communicator.

The learners' response has been extremely positive overall. The auto-biographical nature of the writing tasks has proved surprisingly powerful and created a wonderful bond amongst the initial course members, who were drawn into a writing community, through sharing common human experiences that span social and cultural divides. As they read their work aloud, everyone found a voice. The whole group listened with respect and empathy and, with time, sensitively critiqued and refined each other's work, with an eye for detail that was truly exciting.

By the end of the course, the group dynamic had proved so motivating and inspiring that a final Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) session demonstrated a tangible boost to learner aspiration.

Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

This project sparked the interest of several colleagues, who were keen to find new and innovative ways of developing writing. The approach was adopted within three Functional Skills classes at Levels 1 and 2 and proved sufficiently flexible to support learners in different ways, in group and individual contexts, with encouraging results. It was particularly good to see learners with a variety of first language backgrounds feel more supported and develop more confidence in recognising and addressing elements of cultural interference in their writing. Our ESOL department were very keen to explore this approach with some of their more advanced learners and, although plans have been delayed by a variety of COVID-19 related factors, it will be taken up next year. The lead tutor for Functional Skills has been particularly supportive of the project and has recently initiated a ten week, non-accredited 'bridging course', drawing directly from the project's work, that will help learners transitioning from Level 1 ESOL to Functional Skills, or from Functional Skills Level 1 to Level 2, to fill the gaps in their grammar and improve writing confidence. The success of remote learning means that we propose offering learners the option of both blended and online only courses next year.

Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

Using Google Classroom as a 'hub' for learners proved to be an excellent means of clearly recording achievements and progress. Work can be easily annotated in its electronic form, immediately returned and improved, producing a bank of learner progress data over time. A particular joy has been collating an anthology of the different texts that the learners on the Christmas term course produced, week by week, which will be published in book form as a memento for learners, but also as a resource for future delivery. The anthology provides a record of progress; there is a clear difference in the ambition and complexity of the sentences written at the beginning of the course and those they produced at the end. Although the grammar was still far from perfect, the frequency of flawless sentences was appreciably higher, as learners gained confidence and targeted recurring mistakes over time.

All learners who have taken part have wholeheartedly engaged and persevered with the approach and many have commented on its benefits. One learner from the Christmas course related in her summative blog, that, having managed to secure her 'dream job' as a teaching assistant:

"Now I am fluent in my speaking and much better at writing and doing my daily work with full confidence."

Another recounted:

"Focusing on grammar gaps and correcting the mistakes, all these strategies helped me and improved my English, especially writing. I can say now I am in better control of how I am able to correct my work grammatically with confidence and my writing skills...changed significantly for the better."

Learning from this project

WHAT WENT WELL

- Our learners were adaptable and flexible, quickly engaging with a new approach in an online context.
- In the Christmas term course, sharing work aloud not only engaged the innate grammar sense of the group, but helped to build a supportive, vibrant community of writers who cared about improving their own work and that of others. It was a delightful experience.
- Learners became more self-evaluative, confident and accurate writers.
- In recent one-to-one sessions, where this approach has been used to support those with particularly strong cultural interference, there has been a transformation in learners' attitude towards English grammar. As difficulties are singled out and recognised, sentence writing feels more manageable and learners start to trust their 'grammar ears', but, furthermore, are keen to immerse themselves in spoken English on a daily basis in order to soak up

standard grammar and apply it to their own written communication; very exciting!

- Managers have been incredibly supportive and keen to turn this action research project into an integral part of our English offer. The approach is currently being used in a new 'bridging course' for learners transitioning from Level 1 to Level 2 Functional Skills.

EVEN BETTER IF

- It would have been preferable if all learners had seen through the process of revising pieces several times for ultimate accuracy and training of those grammar ears.
- It would have been valuable to test how the approach could be integrated more effectively within Functional Skills courses, as well as working as a standalone course.
- More opportunities to collaborate with colleagues would have allowed us to find out if, and how, elements of the approach work in different contexts and with different cohorts.

Appendix 1 – The project team

Project Role	Name	Job Role
Project Lead	Rachel Greenslade	English tutor
	Alex Cooke	Quality Manager
Project team	Louise Pinder	English tutor
Project Mentor	Sonia Thomas (ccConsultancy)	
Research Group Lead	Sue Lownsborough (ccConsultancy)	

Appendix 2 – Anthology of Learner Work

DEVELOPING WRITING: AN ANTHOLOGY OF SHARED LIVES, GATHERED DURING LOCKDOWN 2020

It has been a great joy to put together a 30-page anthology of the autobiographical pieces that the learners produced on the Christmas term course. Below is a selection of work from four of the learners which illustrates how the course had a positive impact on their confidence and ambition as writers, but also enabled them to focus on, and address, recurring grammar mistakes, such as those involving tenses, definite and indefinite articles, subject-verb agreement and use of prepositions.

'H'

'My Dream Job'

If I could do any job I would like to be an interpreter for those people who are struggling to speak English and this job is my passion since I came this country, I have always dreamed for this to be my future job.

My second dream job is I would like to be a teacher assistant because this job is not very difficult as I am patient and I know how to deal with the kids, as I have four kids which is suitable for me to work and collect my kids from school.

'Childhood Home'

Everyone has the story of their life that needs to be told, but my childhood story was completely different compare to the life in the city.

I was born in Yemen, especially in the village. I lived with my mother and brothers and sisters, while my father was working in the capital city.

I used to live in a big house made up of five large rooms, two bathrooms and a large kitchen.

In the village you could hear the animals sound coming from everywhere like cows, donkeys, chickens, dogs and roosters, they all wake me up every day when they see the sunrise.

Most of the time I used to hear the animals because I struggle to sleep, but when I grew up, I started to like the animals. I found the wild life ten times better then cities or crowded areas, especially when I hear the sound of the animals mixed with the sound of the birds and the scent of the pure air and mild atmosphere, no one can fill this feeling unless they live this life.

When I grew up all my brothers and sisters moved to the capital city to finish their studying in the university. While I am the youngest I used to study at school in the morning them in the afternoon I have to help my mum in the farm and feed the animals then the rest of the day I play with my friends. I never felt like life was hard, it was always enjoyable. In my childhood I was crazy about playing outside I hate when my mum tells me to come back home until one time I ignored her and ran away, but I

wasn't lucky, there was a crazy dog that ran after me then I ran home quickly crying and apologising to her for not listening.

'A Letter to My 16 Year-Old Self'

Dear 'H***',

Today I am writing to you to tell you about my life when I was sixteen years old.

In my village there was a free community support centre to help those women and student who have never been to school. Every Summer, after school we have three months' holiday to find your hobby, so there was many activities like cooking, knitting, sewing, make up and designing home. I was choose knitting baby socks for three months. I gained experience and I learned two different designs of socks. I started to sell most of them. I was very happy because I earned money that was the first time in my life to gain money. Unfortunately, I wasn't lucky I couldn't continue knitting for two reason, first, my teacher travelled to a different country and she didn't come back to work any more, the second thing, I have only two type of design and people don't like them any more so, I stopped knitting.

One year later, I have tried to sew by machine and that was brilliant for me because I have never been sewing using a machine while my mum has a sewing machine but I never tried it, I like to go to the centre because my teacher teach us step-by-step.

After I got married I stopped sewing because I came to Sheffield and I don't know how to find the set of threads and needles at the same time. I struggle to find places that sew clothing but when I found the sewing place they charge me a lot of money while, I can sew by myself, but unfortunately I don't have a machine.

Currently, I bought sewing machine and I am sewing everything that needs repair and in the future I will teach my daughter.

With love from yourself!

'When I Am Old...'

When I am an old woman, I will take my scarf off, but that will never happen.

When I am an old woman, I will bribe my grandchildren with candy so they can love me more and come to my house.

When I am an old woman, I will eat everything that the doctor tells me not to eat.

When I am an old woman, I will smudge the henna all over my hands and hair.

When I am an old woman, I shall not clean my house, I will reward my grandchildren to clean it.

'A Learner's Journey'

At the beginning of the year, I didn't feel confident when I needed to send a message I need reassurance whether if it was right or wrong or made a mistake however now I feel much more confident with my grammar. Before, I used to find it complicated.

I think Zoom was a great experience because during this pandemic you didn't have to leave your home. Zoom was good for me because my husband had a car accident. It was difficult for me to attend class and leave my husband alone. But I prefer to go to the classroom because it is face to face and I can communicate with a lot of people and get more support.

I have enjoyed studying with as it was simple and useful through Zoom and no need to prepare to go out and make an effort. It also helped me save more money as I don't have to drive to class and search for a parking spot.

In the future, I wish to speak fluently especially as my next step is to be an interpreter. Overall this was a good experience and helpful.

'A'

'My Dream Job'

If I would be able to choose any job it would be a teaching because teaching is my passion. I want to make a difference in lives of children and mine as well because when you teach kids you also learn a lot of things from them.

'Childhood Home'

Childhood is such a passing time that even if people grow older, they enjoy remembering the past moments of their life and places where they grew up. These places can be homes or places with lots of mixed (pleasant and unpleasant) memories.

I spent my entire childhood in the same house which was in a beautiful city Gujranwala in Pakistan. My house was situated in the middle of the city surrounded by tall and huge green trees. If I closed my eyes, I can smell different fragrances like; lemon, orange, roses and many more.

There was a huge grey wooden gate to enter the house. When we entered the house, the first person who welcomed us was our dog daisy in the front garden. Our garden was full of aromas about 110 types of different plants including flower, fruit and vegetables. There was a small fountain in the middle of our garden. In winter days, we always sat for sun bathe in our garden and summer time we all spent our evenings playing different games, eating and drinking different food and beverages.

If we went further down, there was a double storey white building with grey windows and doors. Flowers, bushes, vines and other landscapes surrounded the house. Ground floor consisted of 5 massive rooms. After entered the main gate, there were rooms around huge courtyard. The first room was a sitting room which was well decorated with comfortable furniture, wall hangings and other decorations. I still remember that we were not allowed into that room until guests came to our home. Next to the drawing room, there was a dining room with door that open into the kitchen.

The kitchen in my home reminded me memories of family meals, warmth and togetherness. I still remember when I came home from school, I always found my mother preparing fresh chapati for us so we all can eat hot and fresh food.

Next to the kitchen there was a spare room with a TV in it where we all family sat together and enjoyed our programmes. The 5th room was a guest room which was used by guests.

Upper storey had 4 bed rooms with attached baths. All rooms were painted with white paint except my room. My room was the only room in the house that was painted lilac. This room was special to me because after school I spent most of my time there. At first glance everything seemed to be in proper place. I felt comfortable there and I believe that every room of every house has its own comforts and memories in it. These are unforgettable memories and will stay always in my heart.

'A Day in My House'

7AM I always get up early in the morning and my husband I say our prayer then I wake my girls up tell them to do wudu (ritual washing) and pray. Meanwhile, I get dressed up. At 7:30, we go downstairs to make breakfast (me and my husband make breakfast for the girls).

8AM We usually get out of house around 8:00 and walk to our car. My husband drops our girls off to school.

9AM Me and my husband go for a brisk walk to the Firth Park so we can maintain our weight along manage various conditions, including my type 2 diabetes, my husband heart disease, high blood pressure and backache.

10AM Once I get back home, I take a shower. I prepare breakfast for both of us (me and my husband) and enjoy my tea.

11AM I call my mum, some of my siblings or relatives. I check my social media (emails, messages, google classroom and WhatsApp) so I do not miss my important notifications.

12PM I clean the house. (Hoover, wash the dishes, make the beds.) So, I can see neat and clean around me.

1PM As I love freshly cooked food, so I prepare delicious lunch for my family.

2PM Still cooking...

3PM I drive to get my children from their school. When we reach home, while girls are changing, I prepare the table for them then we all have our tasty and yummy lunch together. Both girls tell me how their day went at school.

4PM I tell my girls to get ready for online Quran (The Holy Book of Muslims) lesson. I wash the dishes and tidy the kitchen up while they are reading the Quran.

5PM We watch any movie or program together so we can have some fun time.

6PM Me and girls do different activities; skipping outside, cards, Ludo, reading books, some school homework.

'Celebrating our National Health Service: What The NHS Means to Me'

When my eldest daughter was born in hospital, she was having a hard time breathing. She could neither sleep nor drink milk properly. I was so upset to see my daughter in such pain.

The doctors and staffs who came to see her would see me crying. They reassured me that my baby would be fine soon. They did different tests and took good care of her that she recovered in couple of weeks after. NHS thank you very much for giving my daughter a healthy life.

'When I Am Old...'

I will have a charming personality with shiny grey hair,

Wearing a gown of sober soft colours,

Covering my head with a stunning scarf.

When I am old,

People around will treat me with respect,

Care and value my words.

When I am old,

My children will give me back with interest,

What I am doing for them now.

When I am old,

I was a teacher,

I am a teacher and I will be teaching my grandchildren.

When I am old,

I won't be doing home chores,

But I will be feeding my precious family

With my special dishes.

When I am old,

Life depends on dreams,

My dream is the highest it's ever been view

Hopefully, my dream will come true.

'R1'

'My Dream Job'

If I were able to choose any job, I would be a psychologist as I believe mental health is important as physical health so poor mental health can negatively impact on physical health.

'Childhood Home'

Everyone has a few memories from their childhood that seem so bright and deep for example you can recognise some scents just because you used to smell it when you are a child and all these scents and feelings saved in your memory.

The earliest memory that I can remember was when my school holidays were starting, this moment means travelling to me. I used to travel to my village every holiday to visit my grandmother who I learned a lot from her.

Oh! In this moment when I start to write about my childhood home, I swear I can smell my grandmother's chapati that she used to cook every day, and I can smell the earthy scent produced when rain mixes with dry soil.

My village was full of life and love there were so many activities to do, the weather was always nice even in the summer, the yards everywhere covered the ground like a bright green carpet you just love to lay down and watch the sky with inhaling pure oxygen.

Since I was a child I love to challenge myself and as a versatile kid I used to go with my cousin to herd sheep and bring some water from the well.

At night in my grandparents' house all kids loved the story time around the gas lamp, my grandmother used to tell us some stories full of fun, wisdom and life lessons.

I really enjoyed remembering my childhood memories and shared it with you.

'A Letter to My 16 Year-Old Self'

Dear Me,

It is your older self here writing you this letter. I am working hard to keep your passion and dreams alive.

I have been writing a poem and reading books as you were the only thing that I learn from this life is. The strong person is the person who can hold on his dreams without losing hope.

I am trying to improve myself R**** from inside to outside, I have taken some courses in self-development, meditation, physical health and healthy nutrition courses.

It is not easy to play my 20 years tape of life back and keep the same health and energy as before especially with all these responsibilities that I carry now but nothing as I promise before can stop our insistence.

Dear younger me, I want to tell you, I have a daughter she looks like you her passion, mode, personality exactly like you. Also I want to tell you, I have been studying English since I came to the UK and I have a good experience studying English and my language getting better year after year.

I am 36 years old now, but my 16 years old copy still with me with all her hope, passion and purity.

I love you my younger me.

'Celebrating our National Health Service: What The NHS Means to Me'

As we know the smallest things can make the biggest difference to people. The NHS does that.

I am a person who had previous experience with NHS as a patient this experience showed me how the health service are delivering high quality care to all.

The NHS worker makes a differences to people who they cared off and they are always proven how competent they are.

As one of those living with fear and anxiety especially with all current events this year and Covid-19. I am sure how our health services are so strong and high quality care because they are putting patients first and the workers sacrifice to save others lives. All that showed me how NHS means to me so big thanks to the NHS, thank with appreciation.

'When I Am Old...'

When I am an old lady my hair is going to change. The sky will show me how the shiny grey suits my age.

It doesn't matter what I will be wearing because I am not on a stage.

When I am an old lady this will be my quiet age.

All people who I will select they only deserve my gaze.

When I am an old lady my passion will never leave my range.

I will stay happy and cosy with the people who will read my life page.

I know age is just a number and it is a stage.

I know I will be the same R**** even with all the change.

I know if you read this you're going to smile without any rage!

'A Learner's Journey'

As a learner in this course I can say this is the best opportunity I have ever had.

Focusing on grammar gaps and correcting the mistakes all these strategies helped me and improved my English especially on writing. I can say now I am in better control of how I am able to correct my work grammatically with confidence and my writing skills has changed significantly for the better.

During the pandemic, many things have changed. One of them is distance learning, so we were taking this course online on Zoom app, for me this was a good experience, I felt no different from face-to-face in a classroom.

These twelve weeks were the best there were a huge significantly changes between this course and Level 2 English course, the second one was so stressed for me and less focused on my gaps especially in grammar because I needed to focus on so many areas without filling my gaps and find time to correct my mistakes, particularly when I speak and write.

Now, I am more confident using English in my daily life I feel so great that I am able to correct myself when I speak and recognise the mistakes of others when they speak.

In the end, I would like to thank my teacher so much she was a great teacher and she helped us with love and humanity.

'R2'

'My Dream Job'

If I could do any job in the world, I would like to be a traveller journalist, because I want to travel around the world and make the unique news or stories about country, city, or town.

'Childhood Home'

Unforgettable Memory

I was born and grew up in Payakumbuh, a small town in West part of Sumatera Island, Indonesia. I had lovely childhood memories. I remember that I spent whole my childhood at my grandmother house. I called her, Uwo. Every day, when I went to my grandmother house after school. It was not too far from my house. We lived at same neighbourhood. My grandmother lived at the Minang traditional house. Minang is one of the big ethnics in Sumatera Island. The traditional house is called "Rumah Gadang", it is mean the big house. Rumah gadang have unique architecture with the long walls which are made from woods (front side) and bamboo (back side). The top of the roof is look like the head of the buffalo. The interior design dominated with the open room because Rumah Gadang also known as a communal house. The main room consists

of open room, bedroom and living room, and the kitchen. The kitchen is located in the back of the main room.

Every Rumah Gadang has the backyard. My grandmother has a long and wide backyard. There were many tropical fruits trees at there, such as honey mango, water guava, durian, rambutan (the only fruit that you can find only in some Southeast Asia countries) coconut and banana. The One biggest and highest was, as far as I remember, the honey mangoes. I usually played with my cousins and friends at the backyard. We picked up many fruits from there. I was an expert of climbing the trees. Sometime, we played hide and seek between the trees plants. We also enjoyed played guns toys but it made from the small bamboos. I could remember how to make it this toy. There were two main parts of toy gun. It needs a small bamboo with diameter 2 cm and the long just for 15 cm, and the stick just about 12 cm. smaller than the main bamboo. We used water guava buds for the bullets. It just put in the hole of the main bamboo and it pushed with the stick. It was so fun when we played this game.

Near the backyard, there were fish pond. My grandmother had four fish ponds. Sometimes, I helped my grandmother to catch the fish. We need scoop and the medium net to catch the fish. It was not easy to catch the fish, because the fish were slippery and jumped again into the pond. Close from the pond, there was small irrigation river. I and my friends usually swim at there. The water flew was not too heavy, in the middle of the river, there were two big stones. We used this stone for step base when want to jump into the river.

In the afternoon, I went to the mosque to learn and read Al-Quran. I always ride my small bike. It was the black bike. I love my bike so much. It was my brother bike, but my brother was so big and he need the big bike. So, this black small bike passed down to me. After the lessons, I ride the bike through the foot path to my grandmother house. I played bike raced with my friends. Sometime, I felt down and make us laughed about that.

I remember, in the living room of the Rumah Gadang, we had a television. Every Sunday morning, there were many kids programme. I love to watch many cartoons such as Doraemon, Sailormoon, Ninja Hattori and Sinchan. All the cartoons are Japanese Cartoon, but it was already dubbed into Indonesia language. Doraemon was my favourite cartoon character. Doraemon had a magic pocket, when he need something, he can take it from this magic pocket. Amazing! He also had a bamboo propeller, this propeller will take him to travel everywhere. Doraemon had a funny voice, it made me laugh when I watched it.

'A Day in My House'

4AM I usually wake up at 4am in weekdays. After then, I go to the bathroom to clean my teeth and wash my face. Honestly, I am not early raiser, but I have to wake up early morning for pre-dawn prayer and preparing myself before I go to work at 4.45am. I make coffee for my mood booster every morning. I like the coffee smell around my flat. I usually walk to my working space. It needs 45 minutes to go there.

My working space at the City Centre. I am a cleaner at the Specsavers. I clean all the optician rooms from 5am to 9am.

9AM I always finish all my work at 9am. After work, sometimes I go to Gregg to buy hot coffee latte and hot croissant or vegan sausage roll. This is my favourite menu for short breakfast. While I am sitting for my breakfast, I am enjoying sightseeing the busy day city centre. If I need to buy something such as groceries, I go to the Moor Market. There are many fruits and vegetables with the low price than supermarket.

10AM I am home. I need to take a bath. Since pandemic, I and my husband have the rule to stop spreading our flat with the virus. After going out door, we need to take a bath and wash all the clothes directly.

11AM After clean all myself, I just sit in the living room. I have one hour before preparing the lunch. Sometime, I like to scroll my social media and find the news update. Every Thursday, I have skill writing online class from 10 to 12.

12PM I always prepare the lunch. Sometimes, I already cook yesterday afternoon and it just needs microwave the foods for the next day.

1PM After lunch, I always do video call with my family at Indonesia. UK and Indonesia have time difference six hours. It means that I call them at 7 pm in Indonesia.

2PM I need take a nap. I always take a nap for 2 hours. It will re-energize all my body.

4PM If the sunny day, I go to the park near my flat or I just watch television or movies.

6PM We have dinner. After then, I and my husband always sit at the living room. Sometime, we discuss about something. We always spend our night look like couch potato while enjoying the movies. I usually go to bed at 9pm.

'A Letter to My 16 Year-Old Self'

Sunday, November 1st, 2020

Dear me,

I am writing this letter to you at my age, thirty-five years old. I am going to give you some advices. I remember that you have reached your final year at your high school. You have worried so much about your next study at the university and you had studied so hard to prepared it. Finally, you passed it and have been accepted at your expected university. I am so proud of you.

It was also the hard time because you had to move to another city. You had to leave your family and start with the new life as a student at the university. Sometimes you felt down because it was first-time long distance and away from your father and mum. Every day, you called your mum and cried how hard become independent. I know at this time, you are so young but you have to optimist with your life. You can prove and do it. Sometimes you failed, but it is the one step to success.

You found a new life as a student. You had many friends from other background and it was the memorable time with you. You spent all your time with many activities at the university. In your age, please do not worry about your future because you can do everything with your passion and creativity. You know, the world has been changing so fast. As a young generation, you must be strong, hard working, and responsible. You should make plan for your life, connect to people, and go around to the world. You can find many experiences in your life.

I know life is not easy and challenging. But trust me, once you go through it you will be a stronger person.

Love,

Me

'My Ultimate...'

My Ultimate Living Room

Hi Everyone,

I would like to tell you about my living room in my flat. This is a typically living room. There are two sofas. Actually, I do not really like the colour and the fabric because it is make the room seems full. So, in my ultimate living room, I want to change the sofa with the neutrals colours such as black, grey or latte. There is a white small bookshelf next to the toilet door. We put all books and documents here. I want to change this bookshelf with a big size because I need more shelf to put all documents. Above the bookshelf, my husband put all his notes on the wall. As a doctoral student, during the pandemic, my husband works from home. So, we adjust the living room as his work space too, because we do not have more spare room in my flat. I think, we need more space to stick the notes on the wall. Beside the bookshelf, there is a wooden office desk. There are computer, laptop and everything on the wooden table. My husband wants to change this table to the medium working desk with more shelf and space. In front of the working desk, there is a leather working chair. This working chair needs to change with the new one.

Next to the working desk, there is a television on the glass table. We still thinking about where to put this television, because it is make the room full. Between working desk and television, there is printer on the floor. I know this printer make this area messy because there are more cables but we do not have any space to put the printer on the working desk. If we have a new working desk we can put the printer on the working desk. Between television and working desk, there are two big windows with a purple curtain. I like these big windows, because it makes my living room brightness and I can see outside of my flat. I want to change this curtain with a soft colour. Beside the television, there is a white coffee table. I like this coffee table because it is a light weight and we can move any time. Next to a coffee table, there is a small drawer. Actually, I do not need this drawer in this room. I want to move the drawer to the bedroom. That is why, I want to change my living room to my ultimate living room. Any ideas from you guys?

Appendix 3 – Case Studies

Learner 'R' from Christmas Term Employability Skills course.

'R' is extremely studious, but, at the beginning of the course, had the least contact with English speakers in her everyday life and thus found it hard to hear mistakes as she rarely had the chance to interact with and imbibe fluent, Standard English. Although I always understood what she was trying to communicate, her written work was peppered with the same, persistent grammatical errors and my hope was that going back to the basics of sentence construction would make a significant difference to the fluency and accuracy of her expression. I suspected this would take some time, however.

R's piece on memories of her childhood home was particularly delightful and formed the basis of monitoring the effect of vocalisation on her grammar, as she returned to it to make corrections and improvements. It became clear that there were some persistent mistakes with determiners - particularly the definite and indefinite article – and use of prepositions. However, her control of subject verb agreement and verb forms did improve after completing creative work that focused on each tense in turn, and by halfway through the course, she was able to spot mistakes when reading out her poem, which felt like a huge achievement! Her mid-course review focused on giving a positive overview of progress, but also clear, focused advice about areas for improvement, with an emphasis on offering interesting additional tasks and finding innovative ways to help her engage with the spoken word during everyday activities.

In the latter half of the term R was highly engaged in the course and worked incredibly hard, despite severe morning sickness. I was pleased to use a range of samples from her work in my presentation at the interim dissemination event as illustrations of a learner's journey through the course. She was thrilled to be asked for permission to use them. There was marked progress in her use of prepositions and articles, partly as a result of her concerted efforts to work through grammar exercises at home before tackling the free writing tasks. We were able to have a Zoom 1-2-1 tutorial on definite and indefinite articles where we used an episode of Peppa Pig to good effect! R also impressed the group by being the first person to record herself presenting to camera as well as producing an excellent and detailed script for the 'My Ultimate...' exercise. It was also really interesting to hear her self-correct whilst being filmed.

In our final session she talked about the challenges of first language interference and how her Indonesian dialect poses certain difficulties in terms of 'translating' grammar. This gave rise to a fascinating conversation between learners about having a 'brain' for each language and having the confidence to eventually stop translating from one language into the other and, instead, think in both. They were all so enthusiastic about the benefits of reading out loud for building confidence and skill and I'm so pleased to have a Zoom recording of all that was said.

Seven months after the end of the course, it was good to have a Zoom chat with R – accompanied by her beautiful baby girl – and although she has had limited opportunity to practice written English, her spoken grammar was noticeably more fluent and secure. She explained that the course had given her the confidence to join an online, pre-natal group and that, during her pregnancy, she had felt capable of talking to doctors about her concerns over an underlying health condition. Interestingly, she has co-written and published a book – in Indonesian, not English! – about her time living in Sheffield. She has promised me she will translate it into English one day and I can have an autographed copy!

Learner 'R' from Spring and Summer Term FS Level 2 Course – 1-2-1 sessions.

R, whose first language is Polish, is determined to overcome the grammatical challenges of first language interference and pass Level 2 Functional Skills. The project approach was used in extra, 1-2-1 sessions after the main teaching session had finished.

R is an excellent learner, who quickly understood the concepts of the research. I wish I had recorded our initial session because, when she realised that she could trust her grammar instincts as she listened to her sentences, her face lit up! Although a little reticent at first, she worked hard on the series of grammar exercises I initially gave as homework, having already ascertained her areas of grammatical weakness from our Functional Skills lessons.

Having begun to 'tune' her ears and mind to listen for correct verb, article and preposition use, she committed to completing a range of the creative writing tasks. Initially somewhat out of her comfort zone, she gradually grew in confidence and began to enjoy the freedom of self-expression, a happy contrast to the strictures of Functional Skills. She also became so enthused about using and developing her auditory memory, that she listened to Radio 4 every time she drove anywhere and took every opportunity to find a way to listen to English during her busy day. The accuracy of her work definitely improved and, although she couldn't always hear all of her mistakes - particularly where certain verbs were concerned - she became more incisive in correction and all of the hard work she put in, completing grammar exercises on determiners at home, began to pay off in the quality of her written work.

In the run-up to the examinations she has made clear and confident progress, demonstrating clear control of verb forms, so that her writing is now markedly more fluent. She does, however, have to work hard to shed a tendency to forget the need for definite and indefinite articles. This is clearly an area which requires further exploration and I can see that I need a more effective writing task to help learners fully engage with the principles of using a/an/the in their own writing.

Overall, although there are still glitches, I am hugely impressed by R's commitment to the project approach and her resultant progress. She is a more confident, more creative and more accurate communicator, in person and on paper.

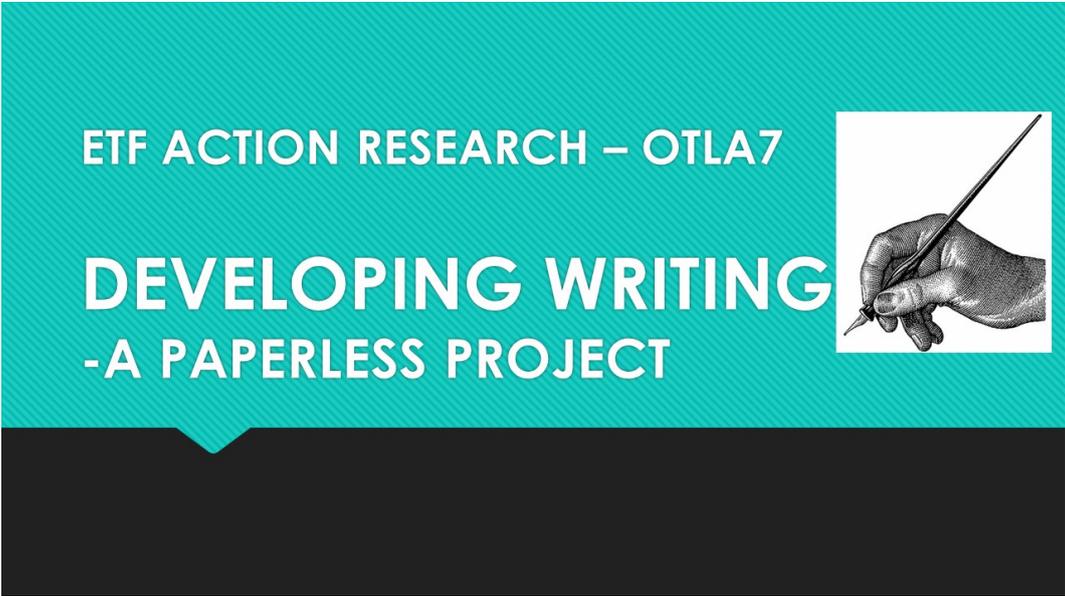
Appendix 4 - Link to video evidence from Zoom

This is a video recording of a fascinating conversation I had with one of my learners about the impact the project has had on her approach and attitude towards grammar. She had recently begun a job as a Teaching Assistant, so had been following the course through recordings of the sessions and occasional 1-2-1 lessons with me after work.

The video is accessible here: <https://youtu.be/NDOdG28v6r8>

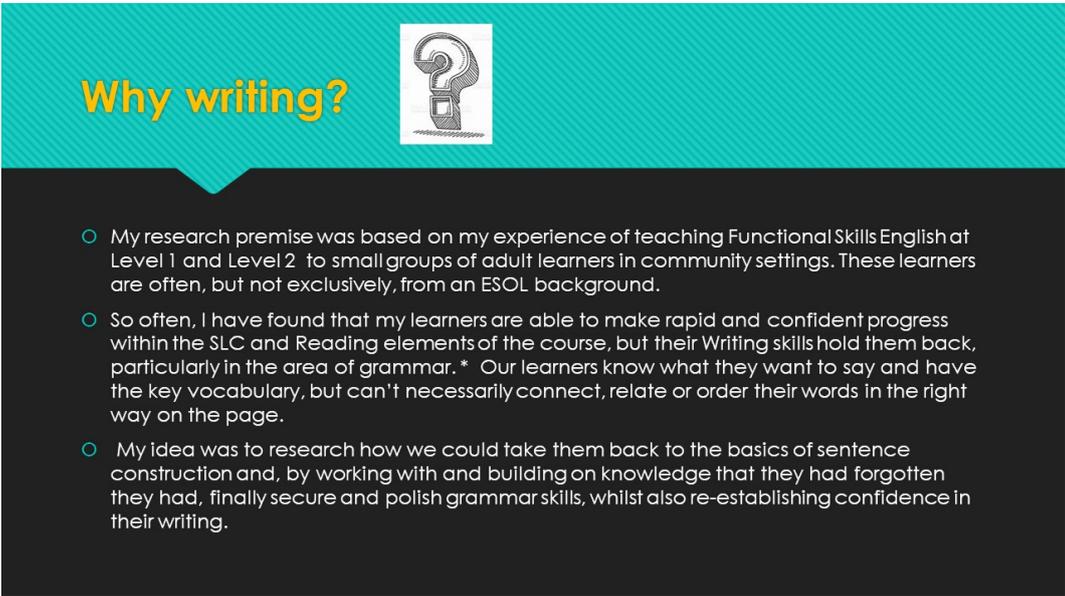
Appendix 5 - Presentation slides used at ETF training event 'Engaging and Motivating Learners Online'.

I was invited to share my project approach at an ETF online conference 'Engaging and Motivating Learners Online' in December 2020. These slides give an insight into how the Christmas Term course was developed and delivered, including a learner case study.



ETF ACTION RESEARCH – OTLA7

DEVELOPING WRITING
-A PAPERLESS PROJECT

Why writing?



- My research premise was based on my experience of teaching Functional Skills English at Level 1 and Level 2 to small groups of adult learners in community settings. These learners are often, but not exclusively, from an ESOL background.
- So often, I have found that my learners are able to make rapid and confident progress within the SLC and Reading elements of the course, but their Writing skills hold them back, particularly in the area of grammar. * Our learners know what they want to say and have the key vocabulary, but can't necessarily connect, relate or order their words in the right way on the page.
- My idea was to research how we could take them back to the basics of sentence construction and, by working with and building on knowledge that they had forgotten they had, finally secure and polish grammar skills, whilst also re-establishing confidence in their writing.

What's the big idea? Intention



- In a 'nutshell'..
- The aim of the project is to make them more effective 'sentence builders' by:
- - helping them to recognise, understand and correct weaknesses within their sentence structures.
- - enable them to better understand, use and fit together the grammatical building blocks they need to create strong sentences.

How does it work? Implementation – Phase 1 GRAMMAR EARS



- My current class of 8 learners completed FS English L2, via Zoom, during lockdown. Despite exam success, limited teaching hours meant their writing skills were left underdeveloped.
- Emphasis is on producing non-exam texts – tasks are creative, free writing based and largely auto-biographical – the majority of people enjoy sharing their life experiences!
- Early tasks are collaborative with an emphasis on producing a written text which is then vocalised to the group. Learners focus on listening for mistakes – the idea is that learners HEAR more mistakes than they SEE! *
- All written work is submitted, annotated and returned via Google Classroom. Work is marked for GRAMMAR ALONE and mistakes are highlighted in pink, but NOT CORRECTED.
- As different texts are produced and discussed the teacher can begin to build a profile of the needs of individual learners. There will be certain mistakes which some learners simply can't always hear or see and these are then addressed in Phase 2!

**“I will defend
the importance
of bedtime
stories to
my last gasp.”**

J. K. Rowling

Read your work aloud!
This is the best advice I
can give. When you read
aloud you find out how
much can be cut, how
much is unnecessary.
You hear how the story
flows. And nothing
teaches you as much
about writing dialogue as
listening to it.

Judy Blume

- www.writerswrite.co.za

Writing isn't just on the page; it's
voices in the reader's head. Read
what you write out loud to
someone-anyone-and you will
catch all kinds of things.

Donna Jo Napoli

PICTUREQUOTES.COM

PICTUREQUOTES

How does it work? Implementation –Phase 2

BENDING THE CLASSROOM



- Different learners have different grammatical obstacles, but patterns of problems do emerge.*
- Once vocalisation has determined what the individual issues are, learners are expected to independently re-visit their learning and understanding of grammar rules through homework exercises.*
- Writing tasks are then set which have been designed to use the particular grammar rule in a freer writing context. Learners draft at home, post their draft on Google Classroom so it can be 'brought to class' on Zoom, where the texts are then shared and discussed. Peer and tutor feedback is given, progress commented on and recorded in ILPs.

How does it work?

Sample activity from Phase 2.



Working on future tense.

- Read the poem – (excuse the American spelling of 'practise' on this image!)
- In this task, I would like you to write six sentences, each starting with the phrase 'When I am old...', that tell me
 - 1) what you will wear
 - 2) what you might say to those around you
 - 3) how you will expect others to treat you
 - 4) what you will definitely still be doing
 - 5) what you definitely won't be doing any more
 - 6) what you hope for.

Feel free to add some sentences of your own and we'll enjoy sharing and collaborating on your responses!

Warning:

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer
gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and things in
boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and
surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.

Learner Journey: Rahma



My name is Rahma Hanggia Iswandi. I was born in Indonesia, on April 5th, 1985. Since 2017, I live in Sheffield, United Kingdom. I came to Sheffield with my husband. I have one brother and one sister. My family stay in Java Island, Indonesia. Java island is close to Bali island. Bali island is one of the famous and beautiful island in the world. In my house, my tiny kitchen is my favourite room. I enjoy spending my time at there. I like to spend my free time to try new recipe. I really enjoy when my house is very clean. I also like cleaning or organised something at my house. If my house was messy, it will make my mood was bad. I don't like that.

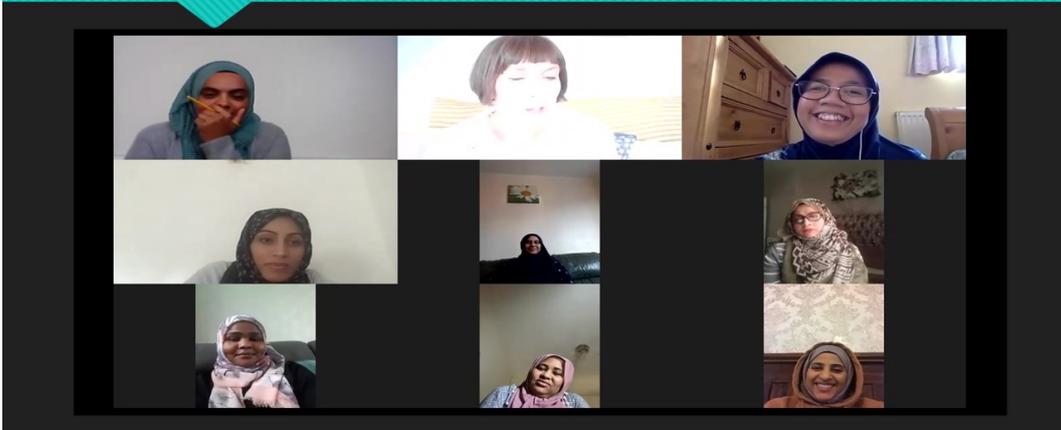
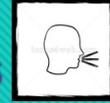
If I could do I would do to explore Sheffield by motor cycle. I want to explore around the city and countryside. *What a great idea!*

My father is my hero, because he is the most special person in my life. He is a family man, hard worker, and funny person. I miss him so much.

I am an introvert person, calm, nice and helpful person. That is my friend told about my personality.

I am interested to joined the Creative Writing Skills course, because I would like to improve my English particularly in writing skills.

Learner journey - Phase 1 : Talking texts



Learner Journey - Phase 2 : GRAMMAR SELF-CHECK



Study Skills - Grammar Gaps & Sentence Build...

100 points

Rahma Hanggia

Screen Shot definite article2.png

Screen Shot indefinite article4.png

Screen Shot indefinite article 1.png

Screen Shot general determiner 1.png

Screen Shot determiner 3.png

Screen Shot determiner 1.png

Screen Shot test 2 Articles.png

Screen Shot-Test 1 Articles.png

2 private comments

Rahma Hanggia 30/11/21

Hi Sachal, Please find the attached screen shot test file. Thank you.

English

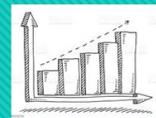
General determiners 1

Feedback

Total score is 11 out of 11 (100%)

2. Could you buy me **an** ice cream , please?
3. A: Would you like **a** cup of tea ?
- B: No, thank you - just **a** glass of water . please.
4. Do we have any **chocolate** biscuits ?
5. I think **champagne** comes from the north of France.
6. Marie Curie was **a** famous scientist . She discovered **radium** .
7. Did you know that **sound** travels at more than **300** metres a second?
8. The Wright brothers were **American** inventors , and

Learner journey: Recording progress



'Once upon a time...'



A Shadow of Blue

Once upon a time, the little girl sat on the bench in the beautiful park. She was alone. She enjoyed the full moon of autumn from the bench and the butterfly who flew around her. But the butterfly did not want to play with her. She looked very sad. She thought, "I wish I could get the idea. It would make her fly happy again." She took a blue paper and made the beautiful blue butterfly. So, she was very happy and made the butterfly fly from her hand back on the branch of the tree. She looked very sad again.

On the other side of the park, she saw the little girl who was on the grass. She tried to take the flower with her hand but it was too far from the bench. She saw the butterfly fly between the leaves and trees and made the butterfly fly. She saw herself in front of the well. Her shadow jumped on the grass. She tried to catch the blue butterfly who flew and perched on the side of the well. She tried to catch it and the butterfly flew again. Suddenly, the little girl came to her. She tried to show her the idea. It was the idea of a good idea and the little girl flew away from her. She realized that the butterfly flew in the park and perched on the better bushes. She looked very carefully to see the butterfly fly and not fly again. So, she butterfly flew again and she flew down on the floor. She tried to find the butterfly again. On the edge of the park, she heard the sound of the butterfly. She was very happy. She walked carefully to look for the butterfly. Unfortunately, the bird came and chased her. She ran away from the bird.

She saw the butterfly perched on the flower at the same time the bird also perched on the flower and tried to catch the butterfly. She took the small stone, she threw the stone at the bird. The bird flew and came to her again. She was very happy and flew in the tree. The bird tried to catch her again and she ran away. After that, she took the small branch and made the bird fly away from her. Finally, the bird was small and flew away. It was a happy day for the little girl. When she cried, the butterfly came to her.

The old lady saw the little girl sit on the bench. She came to the little girl and then she carried the little girl to the little girl. She sat on the wheel chair and brought her back home. The butterfly flew away to the village. The blue butterfly brought a light of hope for the children and also everyone.

Lucky last sentence.

A good effort Rahma and there is some real improvement in your control of the past tense - it's just a matter of making that consistent. LISTEN to your shadow's comment - my wish in Articles + prepositions also need attention -

A Shadow of Blue

Once upon a time, a little girl sat on a bench in the beautiful park alone. When she enjoyed the full moon of autumn from the bench and a butterfly flew around her. But the butterfly did not want to play with her. She looked very sad for a while but after that she got an idea. It would make her fly happy again. She took blue paper in the park of the bench beside her. She folded the paper because a wing and made the beautiful blue butterfly. So, she was very happy and made the blue butterfly fly away from her and it was stuck on the branch of a high tree. She looked very sad again.

On the other side of the park, she saw a little girl who was on the grass. She tried to take the flower but it was too far from the bench. She saw the butterfly fly between the leaves and trees and made the butterfly fly. She saw herself in front of the well. Her shadow jumped on the grass. She tried to catch the blue butterfly who flew and perched on the side of the well. She tried to catch it and the butterfly flew again. Suddenly, a big stone came to her. She realized that the butterfly flew in the park and perched on the better bushes. She looked very carefully to see the butterfly fly and not fly again. So, she butterfly flew again and she flew down on the floor. She tried to find the butterfly again. But on the edge of the park, she heard the sound of the butterfly. She was very happy. She walked carefully to look for the butterfly. Unfortunately, the bird came and chased her. She ran away from the bird.

She saw the butterfly perched on the flower, but at the same time the bird perched on the flower and tried to catch the butterfly. She took a small stone, she threw the stone at the bird. The bird flew and came to her again. She was very happy and flew in the tree. The bird tried to catch her again and she ran away. After that, she took the small branch and made the bird fly away from her. Finally, the bird was small and flew away. It was a happy day for the little girl. When she cried, the butterfly came to her.

The old lady saw the little girl was sitting on the bench. She came to the little girl and then she carried her. She put her in a wheelchair and brought her back home. In a wheel chair, the little girl got perched on the bench and there was a blue butterfly. The butterfly flew away to the village. The blue butterfly brought a light of hope for the children and also everyone.

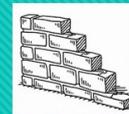
Learner journey: Individualisation



It is a medium bedroom. There is bed in the left. The bed made of the wood. On top of the bed, there are two portraits paint. Above the portraits paint, there are two yellow notes. There are two chair in this room, one chair beside the bed and one chair near the door. Beside the small chair, there is wood table. Above the wood table and small chair, there is a window with green paint. Near the door, the towel stick on the wall.

The prepositions are actually very accurate - well done! There are, however, quite a few other mistakes, especially with articles. This is something we will work on in our tutorial.

Learner Journey: Building better sentences and greater confidence



My Ultimate Living Room

Hi Everyone,

I would like to tell you about my living room in my flat. This is my ultimate living room. There are two sofas. Actually, I do not really like the colour and the fabric because it is make the room seems full. So, in my ultimate living room, I want to change the sofa with neutral colours such as black, grey or beige. There are two bookshelves near the front door. We put books and documents here. I want to change bookshelf with a table because I need more shelf to put all documents. In my bookshelf, my husband put all his notes and work. As a general student, during the pandemic, my husband stills from home. So, we adjust the living room as his work space too, because we don't have more spare room in my flat. I think we need more space to stick the notes on the wall. In the bookshelf, there is a computer desk, there are a monitor, laptop and keyboard on the wooden table. My husband want to change this table to the more working desk with more shelf and space. In his working desk, there is another working chair. This working chair needs to change with a new one.

In the working desk, there is a television on the glass table. We are thinking about where to put this television, because it is make the room full. In the working desk and television, there is printer on the floor. I know this printer make the room working because there are more space but we do not have any space to put the printer on the working desk. If we have a new working desk, we can put the printer on the working desk. In the television and working desk, there are two big windows with a single curtain. The two big windows, because it makes my living room brighter and I can see outside of my flat. I want to change this curtain with colour. In the television, there is a coffee table. I like this coffee table because it is light weight and we can move it from one place to another coffee table, there is a small drawer. Actually, I do not need this drawer in this room. I want to move the drawer to the bedroom. That is why, I want to change my living room to my ultimate living room. Any suggestion you guys?

Outstanding progress!



Is it working? Impact.



- Thus far, I have discovered that focusing on one area of writing alone enables learners to feel less intimidated by the process as a whole and more confidently and concertedly engage with the challenges of grammatical accuracy. Telling them that I won't be marking spelling or punctuation has clearly been a relief and yet there have been hardly any mistakes in these two areas – food for thought!
- Vocalising their work has made a significant difference to learners' confidence in spotting grammar errors and has proved that their 'ear' for accurate grammar structures is better than their 'eye' for mistakes
- I have also discovered that giving these post- Functional Skills learners the freedom to write personally and creatively releases a greater interest in and love for language and self-expression.
- Lastly, (for now!) I've discovered that asking them to complete more regimented grammar study and quizzes at home and then making our two hour sessions collaborative, creative and discursive has made grammar less onerous and (almost) a joy - well, sometimes at least!

Is it working?! Impact



So, what difference has it made thus far? I'll let my learners tell you themselves...

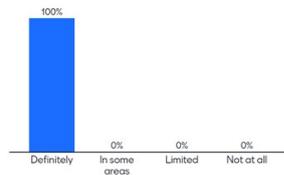


Does it work?! Impact



Go to www.menti.com and use the code 18 87 72 1

Have you seen an improvement in the grammatical accuracy of your sentences as a result of this course?



How would you describe the course in three words?



Does it work?! Impact



We also have a house in the village that we went every autumn, unfortunately, we weren't allowed to go as much as we desire because of school. Every Wednesday we feel overjoyed because next day is Thursday so we would go to village (we go on Thursday and back Friday evening) is such a short time but it feel like we being there for a year. I love going to village because of weather especially after running the small of sand makes you want to ingest, fresh air, fresh food that cooked with wood or coal, at night we put blanket on the floor and sleep on in it, it is amazing feeling.

When i was pregnant with my first child, i had complication with my pregnancy at the sometime i can't speak English. I was so scared, even though my husband was by my side but i felt alone. Thankfully there was a nurse called Debra she held my hand, smiled and told me everything will be find and assured my husband she will look after me while i was in the operation room and let him know how the operation went. At that time i felt safe with her, everyday she will come in my room and asked me how i'm doing or if i need any help.

When my son was born he has pneumonia and so many complications, after 15 days at hospital i went home. The thoughts that's i felt when i left my child is unbearable, guilty and overwhelmed. A nurse in ICU assured me that she will look after him; she provided me with phone number to call her any time, i didn't know why but i felt he will be safe with her, i called her 3 in the morning she answered, when i arrived one evening she was sitting next to him it melted my heart.

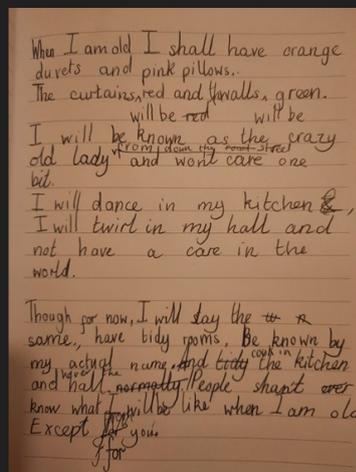
What next?



- This particular approach was designed for higher level learners who are considering next steps into employment, other FE or university courses, but I'd love to see how it works (or doesn't!) beyond my own group.
- The course with my current cohort finishes next week. After sharing the project with lead tutors across our service, our organisation has agreed to trial the approach in different contexts – as part of Level 1 Functional Skills Zoom classes, as an online bridging course for post-Level 1 ESOL learners transitioning to Level 1 Functional Skills and possibly for 1-2-1 English tutoring in our post-16 Apprenticeships provision.
- I am particularly interested to see if this approach has the same impact on the grammatical accuracy and sentence writing confidence of first language English speakers as it appears to have had on those from an ESOL background.

FINAL THOUGHTS... How can/will this work with other types of learners?

Fimsy sentence structure is surprisingly prevalent amongst all sorts of different groups of learners these days. Could this be due to the brevity imposed on online communicators by Twitter and text speak? Are schools so focused on cramming sentences full of features that simple grammatical integrity gets overlooked? Do we all need to develop better 'grammar ears', listen to our writing and take a little more time to craft our sentences?



Appendix 6 - Selection of end of year reflections - June

FELLOW TUTOR – Louise Pinder

I have been working with the principles within the project with my Level 1 learners. I have asked them to read sentences out loud and use their grammar ears to spot mistakes. This has been useful for all of them. They have now recognised that to edit they need to do more than just re-read. If it is spoken out loud, they can identify more errors than simply re-reading.

We began to use the structure, in the way that Rachel had suggested and trialled, as a bridging course between Level 1 and Level 2. All learners reported that the experience was helpful to them. These are their comments:

"I still have problems with CL and small i so i now understand that. I can hear the grammar and identify the wrong, so it was good today." VT

"Useful to find other words - improving my vocabulary. Found the grammar ears useful." CP

"I learnt another way to answer the questions - in full sentences, improving my grammar." WH

"I felt like I improved in my grammar - especially in punctuation." SH

"I feel by reading out the sentences I can correct my grammar and punctuation errors." MG.

I am pleased we completed the full session and all identified the many benefits that following this plan will bring. It not only helped with the grammar but other aspects of composition too. As a group, we all said it was an enjoyable and interesting project to have completed.

ESOL LEAD TUTOR – Sharna Williams

Since first hearing about this project's premise last year, I have been convinced of its importance and relevance for our learners. Too often we see learners struggling to progress because they are held back by the gaps in their written grammar and, only recently, there has been a consensus, nationally, that the difference between ESOL assessment levels is too wide and needs to be bridged more carefully and effectively. The 'bridging course' idea, which is already being developed from this project for learners moving from Level 1 to Level 2 in Functional English, is one we are keen to adopt and adapt. Our department has been inspired to see that, sometimes, focus on content means learners do not have sufficient time to fully absorb grammar and take ownership of it. If they are to be successful communicators, grammar must be given specific time, focus and attention.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS LEAD – Jenny Lyons-Dennis

As a curriculum manager, I have been keen, from the project's inception, to adapt the approach into a bridging course, as part of improving learner achievement, learner confidence and learner retention. From a holistic point of view, a course solely focused on grammar gaps will ultimately give learners confidence in their own writing and encourage independent thinking. Furthermore, the collaborative and analytical element of the approach also develops broader skills for learning and life success, enabling our learners to become more skilful and effective communicators.

1-2-1 TUTEE – Renata Madro

I think sessions one by one helps me with my grammar. I am more confident in what I write. When I write, I now know how to focus on the words which I write. In the beginning, I think it was more helpful when you read to me than when I read to myself because I didn't hear my mistakes. Now I think when I read independently, I can quickly spot the error. I think without those extra lessons, I would not make any effort with my writing.

Appendix 7 – ‘Bridging course’ tutor diary – June/July

Louise Pinder, Functional Skills tutor.

Learners on this course had completed Functional Skills English Level 1 earlier in the summer term and were preparing to begin Level 2 in the following academic year.

Week 1:

At first, while we were working through the first example, which didn't seem to have many errors, I was unsure if my set of learners were too advanced for this. The grammar was almost always correct. However, within this example there were errors that didn't jump from the page until you read them out loud. We also managed to upscale vocabulary, consolidate formal and informal language and we developed our punctuation skills. They were more easily able to identify where to put punctuation and which type would be best. As we worked through examples, this pattern was repeated. There were common errors within singular and plural verb choices that we could identify and correct. The learners found the support of their peers in the paired work extremely useful. I noticed that when writing down what we were saying they were more able to answer in full sentences - rather than an answer to a question. Example: "Where do you live?" "UK" was the answer on the first attempt. After discussion, "Now, I am currently living in the UK." All learners reported that the experience was helpful to them. Their comments were collated on the slides.

I am pleased we completed the full session and all identified the many benefits that following this plan will bring. It not only helped with the grammar but other aspects of composition too. As a group, we all said it was an enjoyable and interesting lesson to have completed.

They also identified formal and informal language choices. Where there was a mix, within a sentence they could correct and identify the informal and turn it into informal and vice versa. This at times was difficult to unpick but supporting each other in a group and discussing it together, made it so much easier. I think this is important to note too. As for one sentence we had to restructure it completely to make it formal. It was very interesting. Even the British born ESOL learner struggled to unpick it.

Even the British born ESOL learner struggled to unpick it.

Week 2:

This week we read out loud the work, in turn again. No one put up their hand to identify any grammar mistakes during the reading. Only a couple of mistakes were identified at the end of the reading. We then went back and listened to that part and attempted correcting. Some more complex errors needed a discussion, while errors around was, were and prepositions were identified more easily with 1 member of the group giving an answer. Each member was able to do this. They all felt each learner had good grammar overall and I agreed, however I did spot more errors than the learners. I then displayed the written version too.

Identifying subject-verb agreement was a common error this week that needed a discussion. We identified which tense the writer wanted the sentence to be in and corrected accordingly. There was quite a bit of tense confusion. This week, they identified more errors when looking at the written version and again we looked at vocabulary choices and punctuation. Three learners identified 20 mistakes in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and one learner found 13. After the reading two learners identified one more mistake and the learner identifying 13 said she found more errors.

All learners found the session useful and again said that they heard more errors when listening. One learner, the weaker of the two, identified that she found the best way for her to spot more errors was to use both the written and spoken together. I've set them 'My Childhood Home' this week. I'll do that one next then I think we'll get into the writing. Sounds like the writing will be very beneficial for them.

Today's feedback:

S – "I learned when I read my writing out loud I identify more mistakes. "

V – " I identified some grammar mistakes while listening to someone reading."

C – "A better understanding of which tense I use for verbs."

W – " I can't see a lot of the mistakes from listening only. I need to be able to read it too. When I am reading and listening together I can spot more mistakes. "

Week 3:

This week we read out in a group. I think with the strong Italian accents it is hard to hear mistakes on Zoom. I only heard two on CP's reading. No one reported a mistake when spoken. However, when we looked at CP's written piece and I read it aloud there were more mistakes. All reported that looking at the written text **and** reading aloud was the most powerful in our current circumstances.

We chose to highlight errors today in three different colours. I highlighted sentences and the learners talked through to correct them. This was really powerful, and we could identify that prepositions, determiners and tense created the majority of issues in our writing. There was the occasional punctuation error around commas. The learners could see it much more clearly with the highlights.

As we were short of time, I put the learners in pairs to discuss the remaining two pieces, using the highlighting system. This worked well when I went in to observe. They could identify the difference between the three types of errors - grammar, punctuation and spellings. There were no spelling errors. I set extra work on prepositions for the learners to work on and we will look at this specifically next week.

Week 4:

This week we looked at subject-verb agreement. I asked each learner to read out their work and their partner to note all the verbs they had used. We worked in pairs in breakout rooms, as we can hear better this way. This allowed the learners to identify each verb. They highlighted subject and verb, each in a different colour, then went through the written piece together, highlighting and correcting. We came back together and went through the written piece, checking the alterations as a group and discussing ideas for the correct tense.

Some learners were able to suggest different tenses - the three different forms of past tense, for example. After working through two pieces they were sent back into breakout rooms to work through the second piece of writing. All learners had benefited from a group discussion to further develop their understanding of grammar. The problem here was that sometimes we discussed so much we confused each other as to which tense was correct, highlighting the need for a more in-depth look at tenses for us all.

Sometimes, we were able to select the correct tense, but unable to explain why. The different opinions of the group only served to confuse us further. However, all of the learners, again felt the benefit of this self-directed learning session. The focus on one aspect helped them to really focus on tense in particular. Some good discussions were taking place, when visiting each breakout room. They all said that the session was really helpful and we can see in the work the progress the group are making. Their writing stamina has improved and they are all writing more with fewer errors.

Next week we will look at articles as this is still an error that is present on occasions in some learner work, although consistent in others.

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THANK YOU

157–197 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 9SP

020 3740 8280

enquiries@etfoundation.co.uk

ETFOUNDATION.CO.UK

<https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/prep/>