RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP SHOWCASE 2019-2022

University Centre Somerset

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WELCOME

I am extremely proud to present to you our eighth bumper edition of the Research and Scholarship Showcase 2019-2022. This publication combines research and scholarship activities undertaken during the pandemic years, when teaching and learning was predominantly online or delivered via a hybrid approach, up to the present day.

Our staff have risen to the challenge presented by the Covid pandemic to enhance their digital skills and adopt a range of innovative practices in their teaching. I am delighted to see such a wide range of projects via our Research and Scholarship Awards, from staff becoming Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts to launching a digital book club. The pandemic has created an increased focus on the importance of health and wellbeing, and I am pleased to see integration of this key agenda throughout this publication.

Our colleagues are seeking higher qualifications to advance their subject expertise and in turn enrich our students' experience. Some are also demonstrating their academic rigour by publishing externally within academic peer-reviewed journals. This is a testament to our staff members' professionalism and their commitment to the ongoing development of the research and scholarship ethos at Bridgwater & Taunton College and University Centre Somerset.

We pride ourselves on a variety of exciting scholarship initiatives: the annual Research and Scholarship Conference; research project funding biddings rounds; engagement with the national Scholarship Framework and the growth in communities of practice within curriculum areas. This publication is another well-established scholarship initiative, and I am pleased to announce the launch of it for the first time in an interactive e-format.

A huge thank-you to all staff involved in writing scholarly and good practice articles, to the library services team for their editing and guidance, and to all those who supported the production of this bumper publication.

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ANDI SMART
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The importance of wellbeing programmes in the workplace

There is a mountain of research available which explores workplace wellbeing (Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff, 2002; Forgeard *et al*., 2011; Seligman, 2011), yet researchers fail to agree on the basics: what 'wellbeing' means and how best to facilitate employee wellbeing. This article explores how the research defines wellbeing, why wellbeing is important and how to support health and social care employee wellbeing.

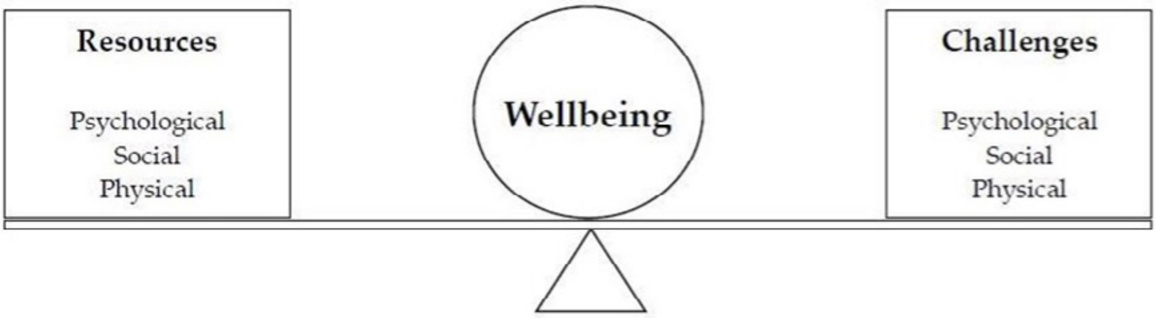
What is wellbeing?

With a lack of clarity in the research around what wellbeing means, it is unsurprising that multiple contrasting definitions exist. Part of the problem lies in the fact that wellbeing is a term used by numerous different professionals in several different contexts. Therefore its meaning can vary. In addition, Thomas (2009, p. 11) argued that wellbeing is "intangible, difficult to define and even harder to measure".

For example, Martyn's (2002, p. 22) definition of wellbeing is: "whatever we do to make the most of our lives by coping with our difficulties and making the most of what we have".

Dodge *et al*., (2012, p. 12), on the other hand, define wellbeing with the following diagram:

Diagram "Definition of Wellbeing" (Dodge et al., 2012, p.12)



Further to this, Diener *et al*. (1999, p. 200) argue that subjective wellbeing consists of "three interrelated components: life satisfaction, pleasant affect, unpleasant affect. Affect refers to pleasant and unpleasant moods and emotions, whereas life satisfaction refers to a cognitive sense of satisfaction with life".

For me, wellbeing is multi-faceted: a subjective process linked to physical, emotional, mental, psychological, and spiritual health. However, MIND (2019) highlights how many different social, physical and psychological factors impact on wellbeing and, thus, an individual's ability to manage and maintain it. For example, Pollard and Lee (2003) state that individuals may talk of improving wellbeing through self-care tools and techniques such as mindfulness and meditation; MIND (2019) notes how healthy eating and exercise has been shown to increase wellbeing; and Tartakovsky (2018) highlights that it is important to be free from discrimination and poverty as these both impact on wellbeing. In addition to external factors, individual factors such as disability, physical health, mental health, access to support, and personal relationships influence wellbeing. As a consequence, individual wellbeing (or a lack of) varies greatly between individuals. The Dodge *et al*. (2012) image shows how maintaining positive wellbeing is a balancing act: stable when the resources needed to meet life's challenges are available. This means that when internal and external challenges outweigh available resources (support, self-care, medication), wellbeing is compromised.

There is a mountain of evidence (Diener *et al*.,1999; Dodge *et al*., 2012; MIND, 2019) that explores how and why a positive sense of wellbeing is important. For example, it allows individuals to: fulfil goals, find happiness, feel a sense of life satisfaction, enjoy a positive quality of life, find meaning and purpose, have environmental mastery which is the degree to which you feel competent to meet the demands of your situation, have self-acceptance and ensure positive growth and relationships, autonomy and, finally, employment satisfaction.

Wellbeing in health and social care

Throughout the pandemic, employees working across the health and social care sectors have 'come together': changing the way in which they work and, consequently, making significant personal sacrifices by working harder and longer hours. Although the research shows that health and social care employees feel supported (NMC, 2021), more research is needed to develop a firmer understanding (and awareness) of personal capacity. This statement *deeply* resonates with me: as someone who has worked on the NHS frontline, there have been times - over the past 3 years - where my emotional capacity and, thus, wellbeing have been compromised – arguably - intensified by the pandemic with all the additional challenges that brings. For many health and social care staff, this has been an extremely challenging time: it would be fair to say that, although the NMC (2021) research states that NHS staff are supported, many employees are fatigued and exhausted: burnt-out - with the wellbeing of staff, particularly their mental health, at significant risk (Health and Social Care Committee, 2020). Yet according to NHS (2022) guidelines, in order to deliver high-quality (person-centred) care, employees should feel '*healthy*', '*able*' and '*well*' and, importantly, feel '*competent*' and '*capable*' to work on, for example a hospital ward or in a care home. Ball *et al's* (2014) research shows how poor health and wellbeing of social care staff translated into poor quality care for patients. Indeed, when Trusts 'prioritise' staff wellbeing and, thus, actively engage staff in this area, levels of loyalty, morale, innovation and productivity increase with clinical errors decreasing. This, then, results in higher quality patient care in addition to healthier and happier employees (O'Connell, 2017).

What can we do to support health and social care staff?

There is clear evidence of wellbeing programmes being implemented to support staff within the NHS however the success of these interventions has yet to be determined. The Health and Wellbeing Framework (2021, p. 33), for example, sets out standards for how the NHS should "support staff to feel well, healthy and happy at work" and sets out actionable steps that "provides guidance for organisations to develop and deliver a staff health and wellbeing plan". In addition, the framework examines how managers, and other colleagues, can provide a healthy working environment. The aim of the framework, then, is to support employers in developing employment opportunities that encourage positive workplace wellbeing and, thus, enable staff to lead healthy lives. The framework identifies how setting reasonable employee deadlines and carefully managing expectations is a useful starting point. Furthermore, the physical environment matters: for example, having the correct lighting, comfortable seating, fresh water and opportunities to take screen breaks are also significant factors in workplace wellbeing. Finally, Stanford (2022) highlights the importance of recognising when employees are stressed, as well as identifying the triggers of this stress - useful ways to support workplace wellbeing. Thus, line managers should take the time to 'get to know' the team, both as individuals and as a group and, as a consequence, understand their needs as an employee.

Avenues of support

The NHS Network (2021) is a useful way to connect to other health and social care staff, seek out wellbeing support and access further educational information around developing and maintaining a positive sense of workplace wellbeing for all employers and employees. While researching this article, I came across a useful document called *Supporting Our People* by MIND (2022). The document offers information on wellbeing apps, as well as text and phone numbers for staff to contact should they be experiencing wellbeing issues. Further to this, Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) are another important source of internal support. MHFAs are trained in understanding the different symptoms of mental health problems and to recognise a crisis, however, it is important to note that they are not qualified counsellors: their role is more about providing a listening ear and signposting to additional support. As a counsellor at a charity, I offer support to staff in regard to their wellbeing, ranging from help with stress, depression, eating habits, feeling overworked, and sleeping issues. HR can also be a good avenue for internal support, they can signpost to wellbeing services, offer guidance to employees taking time off due to mental ill health, help with decreasing job responsibilities and/or amending work contracts to be more accommodating. The Health and Safety Executive (2022) (HSE) is another good practical source of support which offers guidance on setting up the working environment to a standard that is inducive of better employee wellbeing and therefore encourages positive business outcomes. The World Health Organisation (2022) also offers guidance on good practice for employers to support employee mental wellbeing. Finally, the Mental Health Foundation (2021) has a vast amount of guidance for employers on how to get the best from their team through ongoing wellbeing and mental health support.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the way in which wellbeing is defined within the research is contradictory – although I find it useful to start with simple definitions and then, if relevant, further unpick the meaning in more complex terms. Having a strong sense of positive wellbeing has a beneficial impact on many other aspects in life - not simply work - for example, relationships and physical health. To have the benefit of a positive sense of personal and workplace wellbeing, resources should be available to assist in navigating challenging experiences as they arise. Also the benefits of creating workplace wellbeing are clear: better working environments, less stress, less time off and better patient care. The Health and Wellbeing Framework (2021) within the NHS has been developed to further support employers and employees by providing additional information on wellbeing support. There are, nonetheless, several alternative sources of support that employers can access, for instance mental health first aiders and smaller charities such as MIND.

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Developing staff wellbeing programmes

It is well-cited that wellbeing programmes are notoriously difficult to 'get right' with ample research available that also critically explores the 'whys' and 'hows' around these 'failings' (Carroll, 2018; Baicker, Cutler and Song, 2019; Wellness Right, 2021). However, research is now clear: a successful employee wellbeing programme has to be holistic (Prather, 2022). This article explores how to develop a staff wellbeing programme, the possible challenges to this as well as how to retain success.

The difference between a wellbeing plan and a wellbeing programme

A wellbeing action plan is made on "agreement between the employer and the employee to protect and support the employee in managing their mental health challenges and their role" (Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project, 2008, p. 19).

Conversely, wellbeing programmes are produced to "benefit the wider team of employees" and, therefore, involve "contributions from many different members of staff" (Seligman, 2011, p. 5). MIND (2021) note how wellbeing plans are a potential element of a wellbeing programme.

What to include in a wellbeing plan

Wellbeing plans should be personalised and practical (Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff, 2002), including information on: what supports the employee to stay in work, what the triggers are that could cause non-attendance, how to overcome any barriers and what to do should the employee become unwell. In addition, Ryff and Keyes (1995) note how the wellbeing plan can be used to open up a conversation around employee mental health and, thus, ways in which the employer can support the employee within their role. For example, reasonable adjustments, adapted contract hours, more shorter breaks in the day, longer deadlines on larger projects to reduce stress, and medication/mindfulness breaks (Williams and Penman, 2011). There is room in the plan to explore what could be done if the employee's mental health deteriorates: for example, set up a meeting to talk things through, decrease workload/hours, take time off (Cummins, 2010). In addition, research shows that, to support productivity and employee wellbeing, employers should be fostering a culture where it feels safe to talk about mental health by communicating with colleagues, sharing experiences and, importantly, feeling able to reach out for support (Seligman, 2011). There is space to provide information on signposting: for example, having a section on services that could also support the employee has been shown to be extremely useful, however, ensure this is tailored to their needs and is not generic (MIND, 2022). On an individual level, it is also important to learn how to say no and show yourself compassion (Gilbert, 2010). As always, recognising the less productive days – and focusing in on less successful achievements – can be destructive. As a way to counteract this, finding balance in the way in which you see yourself within your role (and further in your life) can be helpful in maintaining a positive sense of wellbeing and remember, according to Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff (2002) - perfection is a myth. You can start to nurture this mentality by celebrating the small successes (Gilbert, 2010). Finally, it can be useful to re-evaluate the plan on a monthly basis to ensure it still fits your needs (Seligman, 2011).

What should be included in a wellbeing programme

Although research is varied and contrasting (Seligman, 2011), there is a broad agreement that eight elements should be focused on. These are:

Leadership and management

Empathetic yet proactive Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) are essential. This is because staff need to feel listened to, without judgement, from all levels within the workplace – not simply colleagues in the office space. As a consequence, managers and SLTs should feel competent in supporting, through, for example, additional training and/or experiences. Further to this, policy should be up-to-date with any support packages made clear to all employees (Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff, 2002).

An organisation-wide plan

Setting a precedent at the top through the way in which SLTs develop a positive (supportive) culture around mental health and wellbeing can help to underpin a clear and consistent vision regarding staff wellbeing

(Diener *et al.*,1999). Employees should be aware of the relevant information, and where to find it: for example, feel able to access information on how the employer can help. This will help to overcome previous wellbeing issues identified in the literature: when employers have multiple (overlapping) wellbeing programmes which can contradict each other (Seligman, 2011). Ryff and Keyes (1995) highlight the importance of creating one coherent wellbeing strategy which is tailored to the needs of your team and which, should it be needed, can be used to underpin the way in which wellbeing plans are used to support individual employees. Programmes should also take into consideration the various policies that are in place to ensure that all wellbeing provisions are fit-for-purpose (Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project, 2008).

Know your data

Collecting and analysing data from previous workplace wellbeing trends has been proven a useful strategy when looking to build a successful wellbeing programme (Seligman, 2011). For example, initial research could include gaining an understanding on the statistics related to: employee absence, the most common physical and mental health conditions, departments with the highest sickness rates and staff turnover. Managers could also ask employees to complete wellbeing questionnaires, focus groups and interviews as a way to review current wellbeing provisions. This data offers an important opportunity to identify patterns and develop services that are tailored to the specific wellbeing challenges within any one department and, thus, could potentially highlight structural and/or cultural barriers to workplace wellbeing (Diener *et al.*,1999).

Engagement

Employee engagement will help to secure the success of any developed wellbeing programme and, therefore, it is imperative that employees engage in the development of the programme. It is important to ensure employees are approached from all departments so that a fuller employee perspective is explored. Incentives have been seen as a useful way to engage staff, for example, a £15 e-voucher for a bookstore or towards a spa treatment or an extra hour at lunch, as this illustrates to the staff that their feedback (and time) have value (Tartakovsky, 2018).

Designing health interventions

Diener *et al.* (1999) state that prevention of staff workplace stress equates to less absences and better working practices. However, ample evidence suggests that a successful wellbeing programme takes a targeted approach as particular employees may require specific and tailored support: for example, BAME and LGBTQ (Seligman, 2011).

Similarly, it may be the case that you identify, through your statistical analysis, that specific departments have a higher staff sickness rate due to being under extreme continued pressure; for example, Intensive Care Units (ICU) throughout the pandemic. As a way to support, you should consider how other departments manage this and ask yourself: can this good practice be transferred over. If you are creating a timetable of wellbeing activities, you should consider the timings carefully: for example, lunch is for lunch (not a wellbeing questionnaire or focus group) and employees with children would find it difficult to attend before or after work. In addition, it is important to ensure night shift staff have the same access to wellbeing interventions as other employees as this group is seen as high-risk, due to a lack of workplace wellbeing support (MIND, 2022).

Communication

Research recognises the importance of using clear and explicit language with the wellbeing strategy which means avoiding jargon (Tartakovsky, 2018). In addition, ensure the wellbeing strategy is not simply sat in a folder on the Intranet (Diener *et al.*, 1999). Instead, make sure there is visible information in the workplace through, for example, leaflets, posters, newsletters as well as in the form of apps and/or sent to staff emails (MIND, 2022).

A healthy working environment

Although the employer can develop wellbeing strategies, it is important employees also take responsibility for their wellbeing. Staff can encourage healthy habits: for example, remind each other to show self-compassion, to eat well and drink water, to go for a walk after work and arrange social events. A useful example is provided in NICE (2022) where a ward sister would put a filled to the brim fruit bowl and bottles of water in the staffroom for her staff on their breaks. Another example is to encourage social events such as meals out, a drink in a bar, a games night – all potentially valuable ways to develop connections.

Evaluate and act

Reviewing a wellbeing plan is an important part of developing wellbeing strategies that are relevant, personalised, and useful. This is because, if there have been developments/changes in need, outdated and non-specific plans and strategies can – sometimes – make things worse (Seligman, 2011). In addition, reviewing and acting on the review information can be a useful way to adapt the plan or programme to the ever-changing and developing individualised employee needs. Even so, all involved should be willing and able to acknowledge the importance of the review process in ensuring best practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, wellbeing is a '*slippery*' concept with varying definitions within the literature. In addition, wellbeing plans and programmes can be challenging if the employee(s) are not sufficiently consulted in order to identify what the issues are and how, then, workplace wellbeing can be improved. This means that many previous strategies have mostly failed. Nonetheless, there is agreement that the discussed 8 stages can be a useful starting point for any employer who is looking to develop a workplace wellbeing strategy that is tailored to the needs of their workforce. Even so, to ensure that these benefits are continuous, constant reviewing of plans/strategies, in addition to employee feedback, should be implemented.

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Humour in Higher Education: lecturers' perspectives

Introduction

Employing face-to-face methods appears to be a long-standing pedagogical practice adopted by higher education lecturers (Jensen, Price and Roxå, 2020; Mangione and Norton, 2020). University buildings such as lecture halls, classrooms and laboratories have framed and supported Higher Education for several years. This is in spite of literature advocating not only the use of online and digital pedagogies for improving the retention of information, but the potential for better innovation and engagement of students (Lambie and Law, 2020). The desire for students and staff to return to face-to-face teaching still endures. Perhaps then the physical presence of a lecturer goes beyond the mere transmission of information, and social presence and interaction of the lecturer to the interactional space is of equal importance (Sutherland and Badger, 2004; Lambie and Bobby, 2020). Lectures and seminars provide opportunities for lecturers to express personal attitudes and mannerisms through their delivery, building rapport, humanising themselves and encouraging critical thought and enthusiasm amongst their students (Nesi, 2012). Within these social interactions humour is often a tool used by lecturers within their pedagogical practice to manage social relationships with their students through discourse (Holmes, 2007), foster cognitive development (Powell and Andresen, 1985) or, in line with Goffman (1967), present a particular face or image that they as the practitioner want to portray.

Aim of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to explore lecturers' use of humour within the higher education environment. This will be guided through two main objectives:

1. To explore lecturers' perceptions of humour within their milieu.

2. To explore how and why lecturers utilise humour within their teaching practice.

Literature review

Humour

Humour has been portrayed as a critical component within social interactions and as a concept is ubiquitous in everyday life (Uhlig, 2010). Scholars have encountered difficulties assigning a standard definition to the concept of humour, due to the unpredictable manifestations of humour and the different ways these are perceived in different cultures and social settings (Martin, 2003; Graham, 2010). Humour can present itself in many forms, from wit and sarcasm to irony and ridicule, however clarity is needed between these forms as scholars have used these similar terms differently (Duncan and Feisal, 1989). Three main theories surrounding humour exist: superiority theory, incongruity theory and relief theory (Carrell, 2008).

Superiority Theory

Humour through this theory is used to evoke a sense of superiority by laughing at the subject of the humour, either a being or object (Berger and Wildavsky, 1994). Laughter towards the subject of the humour manifests itself because of the sudden recognition that we as the observer are better than the subject of the humour, this was deemed a 'sudden glory' (Kuipers, 2008). Other scholars have added to this concept suggesting that humour used in this way serves a purpose for the individual(s) presenting the humour, in that it allows them to build self-esteem and confidence (Buijzan and Valkenberg, 2004). Contrastingly others have deemed the use of this type of humour as scornful and degrading towards those who are the subject of the humour (Billig, 2005).

Superiority theory also deals with the concept of self-superiority, in that humour as an expression between speaker and listener can be used as a method of control or a way of presenting resistance (Weaver, 2010). Therefore, serving as a way of reinforcing the status or re-establishing the hierarchy within a group (Billig, 2005).

Incongruity Theory

The occurrence of humour through incongruity theory is based on the concept that surprise facilitates the presentation of humour (Meyer, 2000). To add, a concept that may be perceived in one situation as serious is viewed from a different perspective as acceptable and humorous (Martin, 1989). Incongruity therefore draws upon the cognitive aspects of perceiving humour, interrupting its meaning, and appreciating why it was used (Martin, 2007).

Relief Theory

Through relief theory humour is directed towards the subject of the humour and their psychological cognitions and subsequent feelings (Krikmann, 2006). Humorous responses like laughter are a method for releasing nervous energy, Sigmund Freud's more recent conceptualisation of relief theory proposed that humour allows the release of tension and 'psychic energy' (Cooper, 2008).

The role of humour within social interactions

A central construct to the theories surrounding humour is the purpose that it plays within social encounters between individuals (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Romero and Pescosolido (2008) have explored the differing purpose of humorous interactions, and early research has proposed that the purpose of humour can be categorised into five distinct areas: sexual humour, social humour, intellectual humour, aggressive humour and humour as a defensive tool. Humour was also positioned as a mechanism that binds people together through social vocalisations and acts as a cathartic mechanism to lift the mood.

With literature acknowledging the many roles that humour plays, Rogerson-Revell (2007) considered the notion that humour is a 'double edged sword'. On one hand, from a positive perspective, humour is linked with improving psychological mood states, decreasing anger, and aiding the individual's ability to deal with negative events. On the other hand, it can be used as a mechanism to mask the negative emotions an individual may be encountering; causing them to use humour to ridicule or criticise others, to improve their psychological state. Consequently, this could have a negative effect on the relationships between individuals of the social group present.

Humour not only operates a psychological purpose but serves social purposes too. Billig (2005) suggests that due to humour being a central construct in social relationships and interactions, society is therefore socialised through the use of humour. Romero and Pescosolido (2008) provide support for this notion, highlighting that the positive use of humour can lead to increased productivity amongst peers and improved overall group cohesion, thus enhancing social relations.

Methodology

Participants

Five participants took part in the study, all of whom were employed by an FE institution and lecture on various undergraduate programmes across the institution. This unique sample, and specific criteria resulted in purposive sampling being used to approach eligible participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Although these results lack generalisability, they can be transferred and applied to similar settings in which the original enquiry occurred (Jones, 2015). As all participants were aged over 18, they were able to provide their own consent to collaborate in the study. Prior to gaining consent, participants were informed of the research aims, nature and potential risks associated with their participation.

Data Collection

To gather the descriptions required to address the enquiries objectives, semi structured interviews were used to provide an insight into the lecturers' use of humour with their own practice and understanding as to why they utilise it in the way that they do. Thus, the semi structured nature of the interviews enabled the exploration of participants' responses, utilising open-ended questions to assist the flow of conversation, whilst allowing sufficient space for participant expression (Smith and Sparkes, 2016). Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, interviews took place via an online conferencing platform, at a time convenient for all participants. Data collected throughout the focus groups was captured via video recording, providing a more reliable source of information when transcribing and analysing the data, limiting the potential for memory decay (Clifford, Cope, Gillespie and French, 2016). Meetings were scheduled for one hour, but this was largely dictated by the natural flow and depth of conversation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred through content analysis which was employed as a sense-making effort to inductively identify core consistency and meaning between the collected data (Patton, 2002). Inherent to this, the data was inductively coded using both primary and secondary coding to transmute the raw unstructured data into rational tangible themes (Tracy, 2019). This was facilitated through adopting a comparative methodology where a general process of thoughtful and reflective organising was carried out to piece together raw data into these emergent themes (Charmaz, 2006).

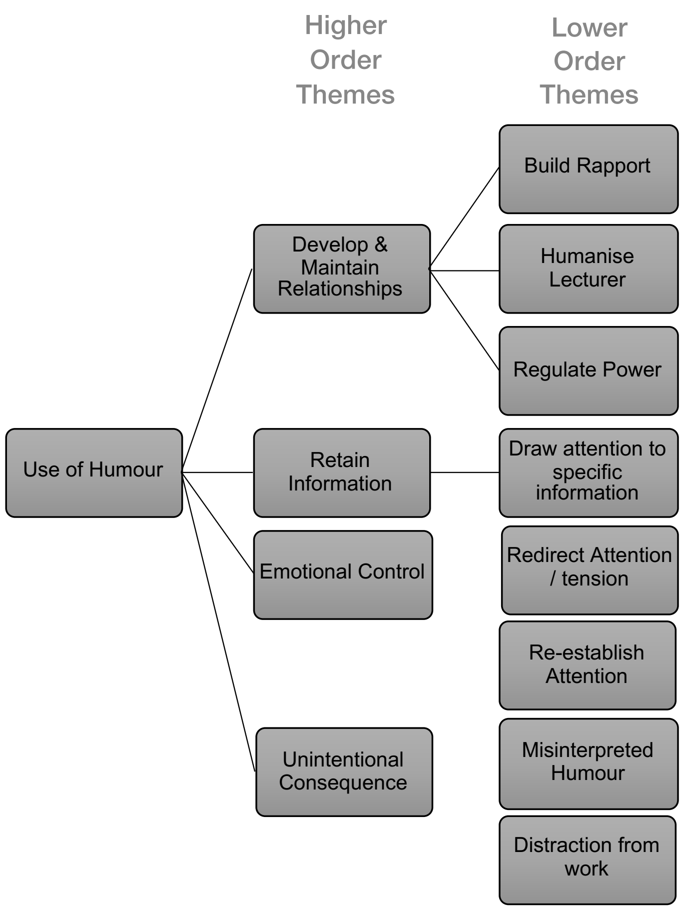
Credibility in the coding process has been achieved through the use of peer debriefing. This analytical tool uses an individual's perspective on the research findings who is distant from the research process, providing an unbiased narrative on the collected data (Healy and Perry, 2000; Carter *et al.*, 2014).

Result and Discussion

The identified themes emerging through the raw data have been represented in figure 1 as a hierarchical tree.

Developing and Maintaining Relationships

Interviews revealed that lecturers utilise humour as a tool to help build rapport with their students, more specifically to establish trust and provide a common platform in which to communicate. *'Humour helps build relationships and trust between groups of people, it breaks down barriers and provides a common platform and positive environment'* (Participant 5). Previous literature has also discussed the importance of fostering and building a positive learning environment, as this has a significant impact on a student's enthusiasm and approach towards learning tasks (Powell and Andresen, 1985; Struthers, 2011). Others within this enquiry also suggested that they use humour within social interactions to help manage the relationships between their students through discourse (Partington, 2006; Holmes, 2007). Specifically, it is used as a tool to present a 'human face' (Goffman, 1967) to break down the natural hierarchy of the environment but also to be considered approachable. '*Students need to be able to approach a teacher in my opinion, the use of humour can help to humanise you as a teacher.' (Participant 4)*. One participant describes how they use themselves as the subject of the humour to humanise



Content analysis of lecturers' use of humour represented through a hierarchical tree themselves, showing that even lecturers are not exempt from making unforced errors; *'If a student is upset, through telling a story of maybe how I fell over whilst playing football would then put the emphasis on me - making the upset student feel more at ease as they are not alone' (Participant 1).* This form of humour is self-deprecating in nature, in that by making themselves the subject of the humour, the lecturer decreases the perceived distance in the social hierarchy, presenting a picture of equality (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Interestingly, humour has also been utilised to re-establish the social hierarchy when challenged by students; *'Also humour has been used abruptly to draw attention to the obvious and to put down students who have got too big for their boots through light-hearted put downs to knock them down a peg or two' (Participant 3)*. This is advocated by previous scholars (Billig, 2005; Holmes, 2007) as humour was too identified to be a method used to maintain the hierarchical relationship by re-establishing power status.

Retaining Information

One prominent use of humour that has emerged throughout the enquiry, is that of using humour with the intention of enhancing students' retention of information delivered within the lectures. One lecturer in particular highlighted that *'humorous examples have been provided within information heavy lectures to liven the content but also draw attention and help students retain specifically detailed information'.* This resonates with previous literature, that claimed that using humorous examples facilitates the retention of the information being taught within the context of the lecture, making it easier to recall this at a later date (Bryant *et al*., 1981; Kaplan and Pascoe, 1977; Powell and Andresen, 1985). More contemporary research (Zhang, 2005; Lei, Cohan and Russler, 2010; Nesi, 2012) has also provided support for this notion, that a variety of humorous techniques help transmit factual information and enhance students' learning and willingness to engage in the lecture content.

Emotional control

Previous literature has also suggested the important role humour plays particularly in improving overall psychological state due to the cathartic effect its use can have (Martin, 2003; Taylor and Bain, 2003; Rogerson-Revell, 2007; Romero and Pescosolido, 2008). Within this enquiry, lecturers have highlighted that they use humour within their lectures to regulate the tension and improve the 'mood' of the atmosphere, particularly within group discussions: *'At times to defuse tension during students group discussions, as it distracts them away from their own current emotions' (Participant 1)*. This use of humour was also highlighted by another lecturer within the enquiry; *'Humour has been used to change the focus of attention to regulate tension or anxiety into the lecture and away from the students' (Participant 4).* Consequently the use of humour aids in creating an environment which facilitates open communication between peers (Leftcourt and Martin, 1986; Herbert, 1991) Moreover, it serves as a tool within discussions to help normalise taboo topics (Bryant, Comisky and Zillman, 1979), but more specifically to the enquiries' findings, it provides a relief and a sense of space to the pressure and angst that may have accumulated due to the opinions of two conflicting sides (Iapoce, 1990; Ağçam, 2017).

Unintentional Consequences

Finally, the enquiry has also revealed that lecturers need to be aware of their use of humour due to the unintentional consequences that can manifest themselves. In particular, it can actually cause a loss of focus and distract students from the task at hand: *'Need to ensure it does not negatively affect any individual or inhibit learning through a loss of focus' (Participant 5). 'Positive if used correctly but it can cause a loss of focus if used incorrectly causing the opposite' (Participant 1)*. Humour then can indeed cause distraction if used at an incorrect time and for an incorrect purpose, inhibiting learning taking place (Bariaud, 1989; Sullivan, 1992). Lecturers have also indicated that on occasions the use of humour may be misinterpreted and cause social issues within their environment: *'Humour should be withdrawn if the individual feels threatened or intimidated by this. Types of humour may not be understood as it is intended so needs to be used with caution'' (Participant 3).* Consequently, the introduction of humour should be approached with caution, as the interpretation of humorous expressions may differ depending on the maturity, understanding and knowledge of the individual on the receiving end of the interaction (Struthers, 2017). This supports the notion made by Billig (2005) that the use of humour is not solely used as a tool to bring people together, but can also have a 'darkside', in that its unfavourable use can cause ridicule and humiliation for individuals.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implication

The findings highlight several potential implications for lecturers when using humour within their practice. In particular, the enquiry highlights that humour can be utilised as a tool in building a positive learning environment and fostering a positive student experience within lectures towards learning tasks (Struthers, 2011). It also highlights the importance of displaying the 'human side' within lectures which can be facilitated through the use of self-deprecating humour, as this decreases the perceived distance in the social hierarchy (Holmes, 2007; Nesi, 2012; Ağçam, 2017).

The enquiry has also highlighted that humour can help facilitate students' retention of factual information within lectures, making it easier to recall information that has been previously incorporated with humorous anecdotes (Zhang, 2005; Lei, Cohan and Russler, 2010; Nesi, 2012). Using humour to regulate the psychological mood within the environment has also been identified as an important tool, particularly within group discussions where there may be the manifestation of tension and angst due to differing opinions (Ağçam, 2017).

Finally, the enquiry also illustrates that humour can indeed cause unintended consequences and lecturers should use humour cautiously. Used incorrectly, lecturers can elicit a loss of focus and cause a distraction for their students, thus inhibiting the learning (Bariaud, 1989; Sullivan, 1992). Additionally, lecturers' use of humour may be misinterpreted by their students and cause social issues and disequilibrium within the social relationships that reside in the milieu. Lecturers therefore should only use appropriate humour, ensuring the form of humour that is presented, matches the maturity, understanding and knowledge of the recipient, ensuring it is appropriately received (Martin, 2003; Graham, 2010; Struthers, 2017).

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Writing a research paper for journal publication

Abstract

Publishing a journal paper is challenging, driven by rigorous research work and writing. Getting published is a colossal task underpinned by tenacity, consistency, focus, and determination that could discourage early researchers and young writers. This article is written from personal experience and aims to help young scientists and writers understand the most essential requirements and procedures for preparing and writing a high-quality journal paper. The article discusses preliminary preparation before embarking on a manuscript write-up to ensure successful publication. It also focuses on the appropriate structure of a good manuscript and the order for writing it up. This paper explains the procedures for online submission, peer review process and funding requirements. It concludes that a good understanding of the required structure of the manuscript, specific requirements for each section and the use of results and findings to answer the research question are the critical requirements for a successful manuscript with an indexed journal.

1. Introduction

This article is a personal view that reflects my experience in publishing research articles with Scopus indexed journals. Sharing my experience might help other colleagues understand the most essential requirements to prepare and write a high-quality journal paper. As a researcher, I view publishing as a challenging task propelled by rigorous research work and writing, underpinned by tenacity, consistency, focus, and determination to be published. Thus, my narrative aims to give clear guidance on writing an effective and accepted research paper.

Writing a research paper for journal publication is one of the most daunting tasks in academic writing, especially for early researchers and academicians. The standard format for journal manuscript writing differs from an essay, thesis and dissertation format or a business report format. Most indexed journals require reporting research findings by "ethical and scientific values and rigours based on common standards of excellence" (Soares *et al*., 2020). Before starting to research, it is best to identify the question the research intended to answer. Start with the end in mind from the beginning of a research journal paper write-up. The intended study research aim and objectives/or questions should be explicit and made known to the proposed audience from the onset in the abstract and introduction sections. Then choose an appropriate title that reflects the study aim or the main objective. An initial background study of available interest journals, scientific news, and blogs will help select the appropriate title and appraise the necessary resources through their table of contents and abstracts in the specific subject area.

Another crucial factor in successfully publishing research work is choosing a good study design. A researcher should decide on the best method to achieve the study aim and appraise the research resources (Springer Nature, 2022). The research methods section should educate the readers on how the researcher conducted the study and checking on relevant or chosen interest journals is often helpful. The decision on a specific interest journal for your article is the first step in achieving the correct methods. Before starting a manuscript write-up, the researcher should read and understand the chosen journal's requirements for the materials and methods section.

2. Before Starting a Manuscript's Write-up

The first step in preparing a manuscript is identifying the type of research paper for the intended journal of interest. The researchers should be clear on the form of the research article, whether an original research paper, a review paper or a case study article. Most indexed journals have different requirements for word count and manuscript formats for various research papers. Therefore, authors must familiarise themselves with the requirements to select the most appropriate journal for their intended research paper. According to Wiley and Sons (2022), authors should consider the article "as a well-structured story that will contain just the information that advances the narrative". It is crucial to be aware of and understand the requirements of the journal of interest, as it always helps reduce the rejection rate of the research paper after submission. It also allows authors to structure the research narrative in line with the expected format.

Another crucial step in manuscript preparation is the anticipation of the future spread of the proposed article to the expected audience. Authors should think about the potential of disseminating their research findings to broader audiences within the global scientific community. An extensive search for journals metrics is crucial at this point, as it determines how widely the proposed research paper could reach the planned audience. A journal metric concerns mainly the journal impact factor (IF) and its citation score (CS). The impact factor is a measure of the average number of citations received by the articles published in a journal within a two-year interval. A journal citation score is the average number of citations received by the journal for four years (Springer Nature, 2022). Scientific journals with higher citation scores and impact factors have more visibility and can expose the article to a broader range of intended audiences. However, the chances of a research paper being accepted for publication by high impact journals are low, compared to journals with low or zero impact factors.

2.1. Choice of Journal and Impact Factor

The third step in publishing is identifying and choosing a journal to disseminate your research work and findings (Figure 1). The choice of a journal has a massive impact on the potential success and acceptance of your scientific paper, the structure of the article, the future reach and impact the research receives, and information on the decision to undertake traditional or open access publication routes (Taylor and Francis, 2022). The use of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is helpful in the search for potential journals of interest and their impact factors. It is best practice for authors to choose the paper keywords and use SEO such as Google, Google Scholar, Bing, and databases like Clarivate Web of Science, Science Journal Impact and others, to check journal scope, metrics, editorial guidelines, and reporting standards. Also, using a journal finder from a reputable publisher, such as Elsevier, Springer, Taylor and Francis, Wiley, could help select a potential journal. A proper study of the journal publishing policy is vital for a successful article publication journey. Potential writers should study the journal's instruction to authors, and its open access and non-open access policy to better understand journal requirements.

Figure 1: Writing your paper (Taylor and Francis, 2022)

2.2. Structure of Manuscripts, Citations and References

Most indexed journals have special requirements for the layout of manuscripts and follow the standard structure for the body of research manuscripts (after a title and the abstract) (Springer Nature, 2019). Authors could manually use the standard format for research manuscripts following the introduction, materials and methods, results, and discussion and conclusions (IMRaD) in this order. Alternatively, authors could use software for standard article formats, such as Manuscripts, Authorea (under Review Services Powered by Willey), etc. It is advisable to read the instruction to authors from the chosen journal of interest for the recommended format for a manuscript as best practice.

Another crucial step in preparation for a manuscript write-up is the journal requirements for citations and reference styles. The recommendation for a reference style is part of the journal's guidance on citations and references which could be found within the instruction to authors. It contains specific examples of citing and referencing the different resources authors could use to write their research papers. Potential authors should check for and use the recommended citations and reference styles to avoid the rejection of a research article after submission. The issue of plagiarism or self-plagiarism of own words without acknowledgement or proper citation and references is critical for a successful publication journal. Most indexed journals expect a high standard of originality from writers, thus setting a low similarity index, the maximum of which is between eight to twelve per cent similarity for overall source citations, and two per cent for individual source citations. Authors should consider referencing software such as Mendeley Desktop, Write and Cite, RefWorks, MS Reference, etc. As a good practice, it is also recommended to check the level of similarity in the completed article before submission using appropriate software like Turnitin.

3. Order of Manuscript Write-up

Writing a manuscript in a specific order is crucial to synthesising research findings. Many journal publishers (Springer Nature, 2022; Taylor and Francis, 2022) suggest that potential authors should start with a write-up of the literature review (if required) followed by the materials and methods section, then consider the results section (Figure 2). The discussion and conclusions should follow the presentation of the paper result, whilst the write-up of the introduction, the abstract and the creation of the paper title are the final considerations when writing a research journal manuscript.

3.1. Literature Review section

Most journals may not require a literature review. However, if needed, authors are expected to discuss prior and known knowledge about the topic of interest in the proposed paper. Authors need to identify gaps in the current knowledge and present how their article will deal with the identified gap in knowledge (Taylor and Francis, 2022). The literature review section should summarise and synthesise each of the previous studies cited and give an overview of the research paper. Authors should 'analyse and interpret' the cited work and discuss the findings from each past study in the new research. A critical review of cited past studies, emphasising individual strengths and weaknesses, is also an essential and integral part of a good literature review. The concluding section should reflect the 'comparisons, contrast and draw connections' for evaluating the cited studies (Taylor and Francis, 2022).

Figure 2: Steps in writing your paper (Taylor and Francis, 2022)

3.2. Methods Section

The aim of a methods section is for the intended audience to see how the researcher carried out the study and understood the materials, tools and techniques used for the research. Authors should describe the method used and the procedure undertaken in conducting their study in the past tense. It could help other scientists and researchers to replicate the work to confirm the exact result or obtain a different result (Wiley and Sons, 2022). The methods section should clearly explain the process for obtaining the result and its benefits (Kekäle *et al*., 2009). Authors must describe the statistical test and parameter used if applicable in the past tense, including subheadings for different methodologies adopted for the research. However, it is crucial to reference and cite all relevant standards or codes of practice used for the study. It is advisable to check published articles by the journal of interest and its instruction to authors before writing up the materials and methods section (Taylor and Francis, 2022).

3.3. Results and Discussion

The results section is where the authors should present the result of the study by clearly stating the outcomes of the data analysis. Results presentation should be logical without duplication of data used in the investigation, and an appropriate cross-reference of the figures and tables with proper annotation will be helpful. Authors should summarise the information in the figures and tables presented in the paper to avoid duplication. The result of the statistical analysis is a crucial part of the article, as reviewers expect the researchers to demonstrate the statistical significance of the study outcomes by providing the p-values achieved (Springer Nature, 2022). The p-value is the degree of statistical significance of the result derived from the analysed data, which represent the probability of its occurrence. A good result section should be in plain language and have data in the figures and tables that support conclusions leading to answers to the research questions (Kekale *et al*., 2009).

Furthermore, a discussion on the implications of the results and research findings from the analysis data should be under the discussion subsection. The debate should answer the research question by interpreting the presented result to reflect the paper's aim. It is also essential to compare the result from the present study with other studies and explain how the findings are consistent with past studies. Here, the authors should discuss the importance of the result obtained to other researchers and how the study result extends past studies' findings (Wiley and Sons, 2022). The length of the discussion section should not exceed 1200 words. Authors should focus on the review of previous studies relevant to the new findings from their research as arguments to support their claims (Hooper, Tang and Wetherell, 2017).

3.4. Conclusion

The article's conclusion section should be concise, and suppositions drawn should be in a logical sequence of the most to the least important. Authors should be transparent when discussing the new study's limitations, explaining its weaknesses, and suggesting future studies for preliminary findings. It is good practice to discuss the potential application of the study findings and their importance to other researchers in other fields and the public. It is also advisable to emphasise the applications of the results from the study in the conclusion section, as it will enhance the chance of the paper's acceptance.

3.5. Introduction

The introduction must focus on the context of your research and give a vivid background for your paper. The introduction section is the summary of the written manuscript, and it should come after the completion of the conclusion section for the proper synthesis of the intended knowledge. The authors should present any prior knowledge in the chosen field and make a case for the significance of their research. It is essential to discuss current problems in the relevant area, backed with any prior knowledge and citations that are less than ten years old. The need to address the issues identified should align with the intended research paper's aims, objectives, or purpose. Authors should declare their research questions, which could be in the form of a hypothesis, aim or purpose statement format. As a good practice, a clear explanation of the research questions that the proposed paper seeks to answer should be in the introduction section. Further citing of previous studies that confirm or conflict with the planned research paper's question is helpful. Describing the specific approach for answering the research question is also crucial in the last paragraph of this section (Redwood Ink, 2021).

3.6. Abstract section

Another vital part of a research paper is the abstract section. This section represents the summary of crucial issues addressed in the authors’ manuscript following the IMRaD format. The abstract should be concise, precise and accurate about what was done, the reason for undertaking the research, the critical results and findings from the study. The authors should explain the significance and usefulness of the study's findings. The word count for the summary section is also important, as most journals prefer between one hundred and fifty to three hundred words. It is best practice to check the guidance within the section “instructions to authors”.

3.7. Title of the Paper

The title of the proposed paper is as essential as the study itself. The title should encapsulate the essence of the research aim, and it should help to emphasise the importance of the study. A paper's title is the selling line of the research work that will attract the intended audience; thus, it should be short, not more than a twelve-word count. It is advisable to avoid abbreviations, formulas, and numbers in phrasing a title for an article.

4. Check the Written Manuscript

Authors should carry out a final review of the methods, results, discussion and conclusion, figures and tables, including the introduction and literature review sections. It is crucial also to review the citation and references, title and abstract sections of the completed manuscripts. Furthermore, check the paper's authorship to ensure the inclusion of all the contributors and avoid any conflict of interest. Proofread the completed manuscripts for grammar and other errors by providing the appropriate language format and standard. Cross-check all citations and references to avoid self-plagiarism by citing your words and copying by source and referencing works used in the paper. Authors should declare any interest by acknowledging funders and declaration of funding in the completed manuscript or cover letter. This statement of interest ensures transparency in reporting the research paper's findings (Wiley and Sons, 2022).

5. Online Submission of Completed Manuscript

Most journals use online submission platforms for submitting completed papers. There are distinct requirements for different journals. Thus, authors should read and understand the online submission guidelines for the chosen journal before starting the submission process. Often, journal publishers' conditions are for the preparation and submission of a separate blind manuscript (without authors' details), manuscript with authors' details, abstract and keywords, list of figures, list of tables, the highlight of the paper, and covering letter. Authors should understand the submission requirements and the procedure for compliance with the journal's standard for online submission.

6. Review Process

All submitted papers undergo a peer-review process following the same standard procedure for indexed journals. Typically, a submitted journal paper will undergo a two-stage review process (as shown in Figure 3). Most journal editors will carry out an initial review and decide to either accept and transfer your paper onto the blind review process or reject it with feedback (Wiley and Sons, 2021). Reviews by editors will usually focus on the main subject of the submitted manuscripts to check if the main area addressed in the research paper falls within the journal's scope. The editor will also look at the quality of the manuscript and assess it against the expected standard based on the journal's guidance specified in the instruction to authors. The critical areas of assessment typically include ethical issues, citations, references and plagiarism, the structure of the submitted manuscript, word count and contribution to knowledge. When the editor rejects a paper, he or she will provide detailed feedback on the reason for the outright rejection of the submitted manuscript. However, if the editor approves the initial acceptance of the article, the manuscript will be transferred to the peer-review procedure for selected reviewers to review.

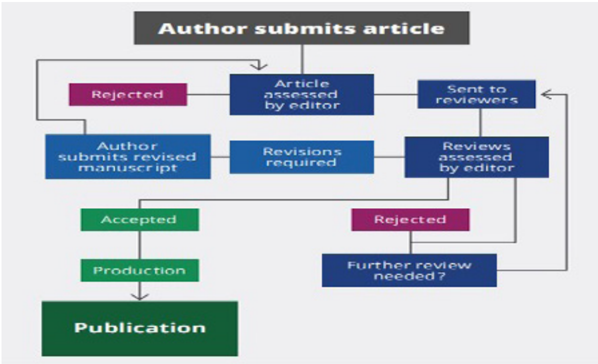

Figure 3: Get Published - Your How-to-Guide (Wiley and Sons, 2021)

The peer-review process is typically a blind review procedure where the editor only sends the blinded manuscript (without the name and address of the authors) to reviewers for review. The reviewers will assess the significance of the research questions addressed in the submitted manuscript regarding objectivity, clarity and justification. An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the study's method is considered, including interpretation of the results and conclusions derived from it. Notably, the sampling technique and size are important considerations for reviewers at this stage.

After the review, the reviewers could reject the paper and give detailed feedback, accept the paper with minor corrections, or accept the manuscript with significant revision. The editor will send the manuscript to the authors if it requires modifications. The authors will answer queries from reviewers, make corrections, and resubmit the revised manuscript. The revised manuscript will undergo a second review process, and it could go through a further review by the editor returning it to the authors or outright rejection. The editor will send the manuscript for production when the manuscript is accepted.

7. Funders and Institutional Requirements for Open Access

Research institutions, universities, and colleges subscribe to top publishers' institutional funding for Open Access (OA) subscriptions. Authors should check whether their respective institutions subscribe to the particular publisher for an OA. Authors could apply earlier for OA through their institution which is based on the publication's charges for an institutional subscription. The traditional journal route is a Non-Open Access route and is advisable to check the copyright embargo and the time limit stipulated by the journal of interest. Some journals impose a time limit of 1-2 years. The traditional publication route involves the transfer of authors' copyright to the publishing journal. However, other funding organisations could fund the publication of scientific and academic papers. To avoid delay, the authors should search for potential funders and submit a funding application early.

8. Paper's Acceptance and Production

Upon acceptance of the paper, authors will receive the editor's letter of acceptance and an invitation from the journal production team seeking the authors to carry out the final proofing-reading. The accepted manuscript will be sent back to the authors for the last correction before production. Authors will have the chance to proofread and make corrections again and send it back to the journal. Finally, the journal will send the copyright agreement to the authors for signature, and when completed, the paper will be published.

Conclusion

A good understanding of the required structure of the manuscript, specific requirements for each section and the use of results and findings to answer the research question are the critical requirements for a successful manuscript with an indexed journal. Finally, the order of writing a manuscript is different from the order of the sections in the actual published article. As a good practice, it is recommended to follow the IMRaD format when writing up a research paper.

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Developing a tool for assessing online teaching

The restrictions brought about by the Covid pandemic meant that trainee teachers found themselves teaching most, if not all, their classes online. This immediately raised the question of whether the usual criteria for observing their lessons could still be used without any changes or whether some adjustments were necessary.

This study concludes that widely accepted criteria can be applied regardless of the delivery method, but it may be necessary to encourage teachers and teacher-educators to focus on different teaching strategies from those traditionally seen as the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. That is hardly surprising but does not mean that the criteria for effective teaching cannot be met.

Except for the teaching of some practical skills, which clearly cannot be totally taught online, it proved hard to establish any grounds for treating online teaching as fundamentally inferior to, or different from, face-to-face teaching. Practitioners expressed a wide range of views about the advantages and shortcomings of different aspects of online delivery.

The study also reflects on whether more student-centred delivery models, especially with a substantial constructivist element, lend themselves to effective online teaching.

Following observation of practitioners and discussions with them, I drew up three checklists of good practice which may be useful as a starting point for arriving at an online pedagogy. One of these checklists looks specifically at HE teaching and can be found in Appendix 1.

The future role of online teaching in any Initial Teacher Education lesson observation requirements is raised but not answered. Should an element of online teaching form part of teacher-education programmes?

How do we assess the effectiveness of a teaching session?

Just as there is no one way of teaching effectively in the classroom or workshop, there are many modes of delivering success online. Some teachers are very keen to return to face-to-face teaching as soon as possible, others see a role for a hybrid delivery format, some believe that online delivery for certain categories of students is appropriate and even ideal.

Online teaching arouses strong and opposing opinions, ranging from the belief that it is intrinsically inferior to face-to-face teaching to the idea that when teaching online only synchronous delivery is worthwhile or that there are students who cannot learn online. Trainee teachers should reflect carefully on the strategies they adopt when teaching online, weighing up the level of the course, the age and motivation of the students, the availability of appropriate connectivity and the time allocated to the course. These are largely the same factors they would consider when teaching face-to-face.

It was clear that online teaching provided trainee teachers with ample opportunities to show that they meet the criteria for effective teaching, though they would sometimes benefit from clear guidelines on how best to do so.

We can look at two attempts to set out what those criteria might be. Rosenshine's principles (2012) have been very influential in recent years:

We should:

- Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning.
- Present new material in small steps **with student practice after each step.**
- Limit the amount of material students receive at one time.
- Give clear and detailed instructions and explanations.
- Ask a large number of questions and **check for understanding.**
- **Provide a high level of active practice for all students.**
- **Guide students as they begin to practise.**
- Think aloud and model steps.
- Provide models of worked-out problems.
- Ask students to explain what they had learned.
- Check the responses of all students.
- Provide systematic feedback and corrections.
- Use more time to provide explanations.
- Provide many examples.
- Re-teach material when necessary.
- Prepare students for independent practice.
- **Monitor students when they begin independent practice.**

Figure 1: Rosenshine's (2012) principles of instruction

I would argue that there is nothing here which could not be achieved in online delivery, though not necessarily using the same strategies as when teaching face-to-face. I have highlighted in bold five aspects which might require a slightly different approach when teaching online, but these aspects would not be without their challenges in any context (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 sets out Ofsted's indicators (2019) for use when observing lessons:

No.	Indicator
1	***Curriculum***
1a	**Teachers use subject expertise, knowledge and practical skills to provide learning opportunities**
1b	Teachers ensure there is an equality of opportunity for all learners to access every lesson, as building blocks to the wider curriculum
1c	Strategies to support reading/vocabulary understanding/numeracy are in place for pupils who need it/cannot access the curriculum
1d	The content of the lesson is suitably demanding
1e	**The lesson content is appropriate to the age group and does not lower expectations**
1f	**There is a logical sequence to the lesson**
1g	Teachers provide opportunities to recall and practise previously learned skills and knowledge
1h	Assessment provides relevant, clear and helpful information about the current skills and knowledge of learners
2	***Teaching***
2a	**Teachers demonstrate good communication skills**
2b	Teachers' use of presentation allows pupils to build knowledge and make connections
2c	Teachers use relevant and appropriate resources during presentation to clarify meaning to pupils
2d	**Teachers possess good questioning skills**
2e	**Teachers give explicit, detailed and constructive feedback in class**
2f	Teachers effectively check for understanding
3	***Behaviour***
3a	**Teachers create supportive classrooms focused on learning**
3b	Teachers create focused classrooms through their high expectations for pupils
3c	Teachers communicate clear and consistent expectations which are understood and followed
3d	**Pupils' behaviour contributes to the focus on learning**

Figure 2: List of indicators used in the Ofsted lesson observation model

Interestingly, Ofsted's research into the reliability of the indicators has led them to the conclusion that the most reliable indicators are the eight highlighted in bold. I would argue that there would be ample opportunity to explore a trainee teacher's ability to show evidence of these skills and strategies in an online session. (see Figure 2).

What is more, in his commentary on these indicators, Daniel Muijs (2019), Ofsted's Deputy Director, Research and Evaluation from 2019 to 2021, concludes that Ofsted do not believe that these indicators have to be applied rigidly regardless of other considerations. He points out that the reliability of inspectors' application of the indicators was less in the Further Education and Skills (FES) sector:

> *...because the model we proposed does not fit with all delivery methods and contexts in FES. The model is essentially classroom-based, which makes it less suitable for FES outside A-level provision. Expectations of behaviour, for example, vary considerably in FES depending on the age and type of learners in a particular setting. In addition, the behaviour indicators we used clearly do not work for adults in technical classes and apprentices in a work setting* (Muijs, 2019).

I would argue that this comment from Muijs could be interpreted as embracing online delivery.

Do some models of learning lend themselves more to online learning?

Darabi *et al.* (2006) make the point that because teacher and students are at separate locations there are some unique pedagogical and logistical challenges. These pedagogical elements include motivating students, promoting relevant learning (including higher-order thinking), facilitating access to course content, engaging the learner in activities and discussions through communication, encouraging interaction between tutor and learners and between learners, monitoring learners' progress, and adjusting learning opportunities to support learners in areas of difficulty. Of course, these are important factors however learning is being pursued but they argue that achieving them can be more of a challenge when teaching online. They argue that it is more likely that they will be successfully achieved if certain teaching models are adopted. They seem to agree with Bangert (2006) that effective online learning lends itself to a more student-centred approach where much of the responsibility for learning is given to the student.

This is not to say that teacher-led learning cannot be successful online, but the pedagogical elements listed by Darabi *et al.* assume greater importance if the teacher is to overcome the disadvantages of the separation of teacher from learners. Darabi *et al.*'s research also supports the widely-held belief that interaction is a fundamental component of online learning that instructors should engage in frequently. Sisco *et al.*'s (2015) transactional distance theory goes even further and suggests that the distance between tutor and learners is less important than the pedagogy the tutor adopts.

Bangert (2006) explores how online teaching might lend itself to adherence to constructivist principles by helping learners to create knowledge through interactive and authentic learning experiences which enable them to construct their own meaning. In fact, he uses a range of sources to suggest that effective online teaching should always use constructivist design and delivery rather than expecting students to 'passively assimilate knowledge'. Bangert is not arguing that constructivist approaches are only effective in online teaching; what he is suggesting is that a teaching model which emphasises constructivist principles is more likely to avoid any pitfalls of online teaching.

Recommendations for observation of online teaching

1. There is evidence that online teaching can often be an effective medium for teaching and learning. Teacher educators should work to encourage trainees to develop teaching strategies which enable them to meet the same teaching criteria which have traditionally been applied to face-to-face teaching.

2. During the Covid arrangements, observation of synchronous sessions gave the observer ample opportunity to evaluate their effectiveness, but it was sometimes felt that an asynchronous session did not provide enough clear evidence of some aspects of the usual criteria, such as how the teacher ensured that the learning process was an inclusive one and how learning was being checked. Consideration should be given to requiring the teacher to give the observer access to evidence of these features.

3. I have collated some examples of effective practice of HE teaching I have observed, or which have been described to me by practitioners (Appendix 1). These are an extension of my original task of exploring the implications of online teaching for the process of assessing trainee teachers, but they may be of use both to teacher-educators and teachers themselves as they are a snapshot of the teaching and learning strategies which can enable a teacher to meet the criteria for effective teaching.

Appendix 1

Checklist of good practice when teaching HE learners synchronously, with asynchronous backup.

Darabi *et al.'s* online checklist	Foundation Degree
Motivating students, including social presence	• Start with informal chat • Consider giving the students a brief period to talk together without the tutor being present • Each student addressed by name at the start if numbers permit • Students encouraged to ask questions, which many did • Enthusiastic explanation of slides • Students give presentations; this gives the class a welcome break from tutor input! • Constant checking students understood how the subject-matter was important for their career • If students do not use video it is not possible to pick up visual clues • Use quick poll to find out students' wishes about lunch break • Consider how you will be available to your students outside the timetabled sessions, if appropriate
Promoting relevant learning, including higher order thinking	• Frequent reference to the assessment requirements • Students asked how aspects of the topic related to their own nursing context • Students not 'live' all day; they can be given tasks to be carried out on their own • Give students the task of presenting content • If your students need to gain practical skills, develop ways for you to demonstrate those skills • Depending on the skill, encourage your students to use video to perform the skill on screen
Facilitating access to course content	• Tutor adds materials to the VLE one week before the session • …but beware of bewildering students with too much confusing content • The session is recorded and thus available for future viewing • What use do tutor and students make of recordings?
Engaging the learners in activities and discussion	• If the group is large there may be a co-presenter who monitors the chat responses some of the time • Student mics usually muted but occasionally individual students can speak • Cold-calling; occasionally selecting a student to answer • With large groups (sometimes 50+) how can you check everyone has participated? • Break-out groups encourage student engagement with the topic and interaction with their peers. Using an on-screen timer ensures a timely return to the main room • Groups can report back on the chat. This is a useful device for monitoring their work and can also be an effective way of encouraging more formal writing which may be a requirement of the course
Interaction between tutor and learners and between learners	• Frequent questions from tutor; students usually answer via chat • Tutor speaks responses to students' chat questions • Break-out groups
Monitoring learners' progress	• Chat. Students replied to questions and also used chat for queries • Some tutors are reluctant to 'cold call' students but if they don't, they need an alternative way of monitoring individual students' learning • Some HE courses are summatively assessed at the end of a module. Does the tutor see a role for formative assessment tasks? Some groups have over 50 students, so it is likely to be quite a challenge • Some online sessions are a substitute for lecture-hall sessions where monitoring of learners' progress would present similar challenges to online delivery
Adjusting the teaching to support learners in areas of difficulty	• If time permits, you could run assignment support sessions where the tutor is logged in for an hour and students join if they wish, perhaps for just 15 minutes • The tutor could run catch-up sessions; students can be advised to attend or can attend voluntarily

Appendix 2: References

I have included all the references used in the original study of which this is a summary. If you are interested in reflecting further on the implications of online teaching these texts will all provide food for thought!

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What makes work, work: motivation and the role of the leader in Early Childhood services

Introduction

The changing political landscape for Early Childhood Education and Care settings has resulted in radical reform. This in turn has changed the role of the leadership, team dynamics and associated resources of these services. McKimm and Phillips (2009) introduce us to the concept of a 'new' leader, who has evolved in response to these new demands and expectations. They describe this new leader as emotionally intelligent, flexible, visionary and value led. However, they later outline that their position in the hierarchy does not always impact positively on teams, colleagues, and service delivery. Fullan (2004, cited in West-Burnham, 2011) explains that a different skills set is now required. This is reiterated again by Bertram (2012) who explains that leaders must be strong to 'shake' people out of their states of mind, to form new ideas and meet the new demands of the early year's workplace. The urgent need for a revision of the term 'leadership' and an examination into the relationships between leaders and followers has been the focus of much debate, argument and research, considering new thinking, demands and a new challenging landscape. Seddon (2005) is keen to emphasise the fact that leaders should be strong and different in their approach, not weak and similar, as they have been in the past. This article is a synopsis of a dissertation completed while undertaking a Master's degree, using primary and secondary research. Motives for conducting this research were entirely selfish. After eight years in the Early Childhood sector as a manager, I was interested in what actions and behaviours had the most impact when managing and motivating a team.

Literature review

Sinek (2009) outlines that leadership is not about power, position or holding the highest rank. Instead, he proposes that a leader is the person that others want to follow, based on feelings of trust. This is in stark contrast to research such as Seddon (2005) who states that anyone can be a leader. He did acknowledge however, the term 'leadership' does not necessarily respect hierarchical positions. He enforces the idea that without the followers, there would be no leader, therefore the relationship is very much reciprocal. The complex relationship between leader and follower has been the subject of much debate; likewise, what makes a leader 'good', or what personal traits or qualities they need to possess, is another hotly debated subject. McChrystal (2011) proposes that a leader is not 'good' because they are right or have a certain set of skills or attributes, they are 'good' because they are willing to learn and trust, which promotes relationships within the team and organisation. Rodd (2010) broadens this idea by outlining two distinct roles of the leader in an Early Childhood setting. Primarily the leader should focus on the task in hand, or the performance of the team; this includes ensuring high quality, setting clear understandable goals and monitoring productivity.

Secondly, Rodd (2010) identifies that the leader is there to manage relationships and the quality of working life at a setting. This will undoubtedly include staff morale, building and maintaining relationships, and overseeing a healthy environment that promotes the welfare of its users (Rodd, 2010). This complements the ideas of Goleman (2007) in regards to the emotional intelligence of the leader and how they must be able to understand the importance of emotional climates. This is especially important when considering the ability to be able to manage interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships and to not be demotivated when challenge or change occurs (Goleman, 2007). Gronn and Ribbins (1996, cited in Aubrey, 2011) shift the focus from the leader to the follower, stating that management cannot and does not reside in one person. Instead they propose it includes a greater set of complex social relationships and context in which the follower is as an important component as the leaders.

Methodology

Rodd (2010) states that confidentiality should be high on the ethical agenda, as it is often one of the first ethical elements to get violated and forgotten. Palaiologou (2012) identifies that the anonymity of participants and settings must be honoured, as deductive reasoning can often be used by an inquisitive individual to discover the owner of ideas from research within small settings. Therefore, in addition to not using the names of either individuals or settings, the local authority of the setting was also not identified. I feel this is important to protect the identity, and maintain the trust, of the leaders, staff and individuals. While there is no organisation, person or company that is funding my research, I am being allowed paid, non-contact time from my current employment to conduct my study, participate in contact study days at university and fulfil all obligations that cannot be reasonably done inside working hours or the normal working week. This may cause me to have a conflict of interest, should an emergency happen during the time while I am either absent due to study and research, or am planning to be absent. Clear motives for research were expressed as to adhere to openness and honesty.

The Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC, 2014) have the Ethical Code for Early Childhood researchers or EECERA (European Early Childhood Education Research Association) guidelines, similar to the British Educational Research Association's ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011). EECERA (2014) is specific to early year's research and is a combination of other research guidelines, setting out eight ethical principles. EECERA identifies 'Quality and Rigour' as one of the main ethical principles of all research. This element includes designing your study to ensure that a broad range of authors, researchers and texts are used and these are cited effectively; participants are guaranteed to have their rights upheld; and using professional rigour in research presentation and dissemination. Rigour is emphasised by Cohen (2003) who outlines the importance of ethical consideration during the process of educational research; he expands on this point by clarifying that it requires the utmost rigour due to it primarily dealing with young people and their families. Furthermore, it requires scrupulous ethical defence and consideration. Interviews and focus groups were undertaken within a cluster of Early Childhood settings in the South West of England.

Findings

Theme 1 - *"Leadership is based on relationships – I want to know my boss cares about me"*

When summarising my research quotes and snapshots of opinions relating to skills of leaders, positive and negative comments were analysed. This was an attempt to separate what could be categorised into a feeling or emotion and what could be categorised into an action or something that can be done by a leader. This provided a challenge as many things that appeared to be actions were feelings-based, such as 'being supportive'. This could be categorised as something a leader does, an action or a task; however, while it could be task driven or outlined by a set of actions, it relies upon the employee feeling supported, or feeling like the leader was acting upon their own emotions, and therefore was categorised in the emotion section. When all quotes, phrases and comments were categorised and counted, over half were a derivative of a feeling or emotion or relied upon a relationship between employer and employee. This led me as the researcher to conclude that, over 50% of what we do or spend our time doing with our employees as leaders that has the biggest impact on our employees, can be dedicated to the way we make them feel. Something also reinforced by Davies and Brighouse (2008) who found that emotions invariably play a pivotal role in leadership, as leadership is a humanist task, based upon and around the sharing of will, want and motivation. This was highlighted time and time again during the course of this research, with employees or research participants stating *'they made me feel valued'*, *'they care about me and it makes me want to produce some of the best work I have ever done'* and *'I want to know my boss cares about me and what they are doing'*.

Theme 2 - *"Memorable leaders go above and beyond the call of duty"*

The above point was characterised within the action research by a few specific traits. Interviewee 2 stated that one of their most memorable bosses was '*incompetent but hilarious – as a leader he was chaotic but really knew his onions about the subject he was teaching, I wanted to be him – so would listen to whatever he said'*. A point of view also summarised by interviewee 1 who wanted their ideal leader to be *'crazy and think outside of the box!'*. While this may leave some leaders recoiling in horror and attempting to draft a policy, briefing paper or guidelines on crazy best practice, theory would also suggest this to be true. This can lead to being categorised as brave, bold and different, as leaders may do exactly as interviewee 8 stated: *'I want someone to listen to my ideas, to value them and be brave enough to try them!'*. This was again reinforced by interviewee 7 who stated that a leader in the past had *'restricted me – just wanted me to do the job – I lost my interest'.*

Aubrey (2011) states leadership styles now have to be ever changing, dynamic, mouldable and flexible for the challenging and developing early years landscape. If they are so different to the leadership ideas, strategies and behaviours needed and applied in the past – it is unsurprising that many will see them as brave, bold and crazy skills and behaviours. In addition to being brave, bold and taking risks, the other essential element to this behaviour is the acceptance that an employee comes with a package of additional responsibilities, passions and demands from their life outside of work. Therefore, if a good leader is interested, values and asks an employee about other non-work related things, this is equally, if not more important to the employee than other leadership qualities or strategies.

Theme 3 - *"Leadership is not a position but influence"*

This double-edged sword identifies that leaders do undoubtedly set a tone, agenda and emotional climate, due to their position alone. I have often reflected in my journal on the element of 'false respect' given to individuals in certain positions within an organisation or company. However, leadership qualities are present at all levels of business due to the presence of influence being a driving factor in the relationship between follower and leader. Interviewee 3 stated that she often looked to her peers to know what to do, how to act and they drove each other on. Interviewee 9 described an absent leader, one who showed more interest in office chores, who was frequently absent. This led not only to resentment, but negative attitudes and people taking her place in her absence. Sinek (2009) identified that often it was the followers themselves who needed the leaders, not leaders who needed the followers; he extended this thinking by outlining that the need to follow is intrinsic to the follower and did not always respect hierarchical position or power but influence within a team.

Conclusion

Getting the emotional climate right can lead to the organisation having a winning combination, however this must mean that if you make an error in regard to this balance, the opposite can be true and emotional toxicity can set in, something that Goleman (2007) identifies as actually hindering brain function. He states that if you want freedom of thought, creativity and highly performing, problem solving and intellectual staff members, cortisol production in their brains needs to be at a prime level. High stress at work therefore lowers productivity and the likelihood of employees to think outside of the box.

Robson (2011) states that there are three main reasons for research: to explore, to describe and to explain any given subject area. During the process of my dissertation I had the privilege of being able to undertake all three elements. There is a strong field of thought that cites research and the process of investigating a subject as a selfish and self-absorbed task, which allows an individual to become engrossed in an area of personal quest and passion. During this personal and often intrinsically driven journey, a person or a group of people become intertwined with their chosen subject area, which can often result in it becoming impossible to see where the subject area ends and their own learning or interest starts. Many believe that in order to take research to its highest level, you have to completely integrate with the journey and subject area. This research had a significant impact on me; I remember citing interactions from the research in my daily life for quite a time afterwards. The emotional climate is something that still captivates my interest. While I answered my overall question of what makes work, work, I did wonder what the actual impact of the relationship and emotional exchanges were on the quality of Early Childhood services. How was this felt by the children and families? Therefore, it was no surprise to find myself investigating emotional climates and environments (from a child's perspective) as part of a PhD starting in September 2018 (due for completion in September 2023).

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MA Creative Education Module 102 (Plymouth College of Art)

MA research proposal: how can graphic design support informal learning experiences in post-16 educational settings?

Introduction

> *There is a need to recognise and value non-formal learning in a creative and innovative way, raising the visibility of skills acquired outside the formal system … while at the same time promoting equal opportunities* (European Commission, 2012).

The last decade, accelerated recently due to the pandemic, has put a spotlight on a more fluid approach to where and how we learn. In the Further Education College where I work, this has come into focus as technology, industry influences, educational visits, collaborative opportunities, 'flipped' learning, extended times and alternative environments demonstrate the need to recognise the value in informal learning. The regurgitation of knowledge to pass exams is becoming less relevant to many life skills and industry sectors, questioning how far the formal curriculum can go in developing our students.

> *College students often lack skills that are valued by employers, such as critical thinking and creativity …. traditional classroom methods, such as lectures, may fail to produce adequate student participation…* (Geissler, Edison and Wayland, 2012, p.1).

This has led me to consider what an informal curriculum would look like within Creative Arts and how meaningful experiences can be generated for students outside of the teacher/student relationship within classrooms. The College and my graphic design background provide two key areas to investigate:

1. Informal spaces where learning within the College campus could take place

2. The use of graphic design as a tool to promote a heutagogical approach to creativity

Heller and Ilic (2012) describe the essence of graphic design below, which made me question why graphic design is not used more extensively in education. 'Every hour of every day we are being educated. As long as information comes our way, we are learning something' (Heller and Ilic, 2012, p.199).

I aim to explore a more self-determined learning approach, defined by Hase and Kenyon (2000) as *heutagogy*, a type of learning that is not tied into a curriculum, but more associated with making links involving ideas, emotions and experiences, often occurring in random ways. This sparked an interest in me as both a Graphic Designer and a teacher of Art and Design at the College. The learning I observed on educational visits inspired me to reflect on how students engage with informal learning. It moves learning away from the traditional transfer of knowledge from teacher to student in classrooms. I would like to investigate the role of graphic design in promoting this heutagogical approach. Putting the students in control of the direction they take, sparking curiosity to explore ideas, emotions and experiences, may empower them, not only to fit into a much more fluid and transient world (Manzini, 2015), but to help shape it.

The formal curriculum allows teachers to use 13 hours a week to develop learning in lessons. It would be a challenge to observe all of the remaining hours and the places involved in learning. However, the informal places within the College building and the transient times outside of lessons can define the scope of the project.

The proposal considers what the informal curriculum may look like. Initially, I considered those underpinning aims of motivation, knowledge, creativity, and progression. Following my 201 Module experiment, I feel there is much more to discover in creativity, and it can be the key to unlocking the other aims and many more elements while focusing the scope of my project. My research highlighted the growth of instructional learning methods, giving competence in knowledge and skills but resulting in a lack of creativity in the formal curriculum. It is a concern from industry (Bamber *et al*., 2014), academic (Kaplan, 2019; Geissler *et al*., 2012) and socio-political perspectives (European Commission, 2012). It appears difficult to define in formal teaching (the qualifications I work with do not address creativity directly), and I feel it is worthy of further research to help shape my informal 'creative curriculum'. The findings could lead to graphic design supporting heutagogy across the College, influencing change in the under-utilised spaces on campus as we adapt to more fluid ways of learning.

Principles to shape the proposal

My research has made stronger links between education and graphic design. Whalen (2019) states that effective graphic design can use information to enhance cognitive processes, increase perception, improve processing and increase comprehension. Although these principles are used primarily in the commercial sector to deliver meaningful experiences, I intend to find out if they can support similar aims in education.

Visual language can stimulate curiosity and creativity; distinguish the important from the less important; categorize; connect; and introduce new information and ideas in interesting ways. Research of graphic design in education and training is dominated by didactic design (Stenliden, Nissen and Bodén, 2017) linked to the broader notion of 'knowledge visualisation' (Tergan and Keller, 2005), an important feature of e-learning and making information more memorable. With no defined location and no teacher, e-learning could be said to align with an informal curriculum. However, with its instructional approach, transferring knowledge from the 'expert' to the student has educational limits as discussed by Freire (1993). This does not align with my own educational standpoint which has developed towards a more progressive style. Constructivist theories inform my approach with Bruner's (1977) work in cognitive learning and motivation, and the experiential learning work of Kolb (1983) being particularly relevant. Graphic design connections begin to emerge through Gestalt theory (Hare and Dillon, 2016), allowing communication of 'bigger picture' constructs through ideas that are unified through memorable visual connections. This 'bigger picture' could be important in both creativity and in utilising these connecting spaces.

Locations

The project intends to explore the potential of spaces within the College, not only classrooms but blurring the boundaries into transitional spaces that connect formal learning to the other areas of life such as corridors, stairways, atriums and external spaces. Inspired by the informal experiential learning on educational visits to cities, galleries and museums, I am interested to find out where learning starts and stops as students navigate their way through these spaces in College: 'The strolling body is drawn forward by curiosity. Curiosity is not merely a cognitive facility; it has visceral and affective dimensions' (Bolt, 2007, quoted in Smith and Dean, 2009, p.132).

Methodology

Collins (2019) feels research should be driven by curiosity and imagination and this proposal fulfils this. I do not know if learning can be enhanced by graphic design in these spaces, but I can make sure the research is carefully designed to give the optimum chance of discovery within the experiments. Using a practice-led framework incorporates my creative practice, design methods and output into the research design. Smith and Dean (2009) explore this idea where the creative work itself is a form of research. The nature of my role at the College along with extensive accessibility to the spaces and the students allow a series of experiments and qualitative feedback that will help inform outcomes as research. Observation and monitoring of engagement through electronic prompts (QR codes and augmented reality) should be useful in collating information with an ethnographic context.

A constructionist research paradigm (Collins, 2019) provides a view that recognises this reciprocal approach between people and things. It assumes objects, words or in this case, graphic design have no meaning unless humans interact with them. I feel this will be a useful perspective when drawing conclusions that are focused on student engagement and transformation beyond the graphic design work.

Having established three variables within the experiments, the designs; the content; and the locations, it will be important to isolate these as much as possible to identify the factors that are transformative in heutagogical learning. My own critical analysis recorded in a reflective journal should provide rigour and focus to my creative development. I can explore the impact of my own perspectives through my practice, but also understand it through a variety of lenses that can allow confirmation and corroboration with students and teachers to add alternative perspectives and avoid bias. I will need to consider the subjectivity of this practice-led approach and step back regularly to see the bigger picture more objectively. I see it is an inductive enquiry, not setting a hypothesis to prove from the start, but exploring a set of principles from one area and applying them in practice to another (Collins, 2019).

Literature Review

The transformational properties of what people see, hear and do provide a focus with Bruner (1977) seeing them as the 'act of learning'. Heller and Ilic (2012) feel there is an extra cognitive step required in translating the things we see and do into fuel that powers various behavioural and intellectual engines. This has become the place where graphic design can sit within creative education. Inspired by Stefan Sagmeister's Happy Show exhibition (Fig. 2) and other museum and gallery experiences, I am fascinated with how students have interacted with these informal educational spaces, arguably in more depth than in the classroom. Walter and Gioglio (2014) support graphic design's role in stimulating knowledge:

The Happy Show (Sagmeister, 2012)

Both Bruner (1977) and Freire (1993) raise the point that the purpose of education is to stimulate inquiry while in the process of assimilating knowledge, rather than memorising a body of knowledge as a product. Graphic design not only needs to deliver this knowledge clearly; it needs to do it with emotion and empathy much in the way Bruner describes. Advertising theory can be a bridging influence here.

Writer and Designer, Jessica Helfand, has a relevant definition of graphic design and its potential impact on others:

> *Graphic Design is a visual language uniting harmony and balance, colour and light, scale and tension, form and content. But it is also an idiomatic language, a language of cues and puns and symbols and allusions, of cultural references and perceptual inferences that challenge both the intellect and the eye* (Helfand, 2003, quoted in Shaughnessy, 2005, p.18).

Her second sentence gets to the heart of why graphic design can be so much more than making things look pretty. She uses the term allusion to suggest the implicit nature of bringing something to mind without explicitly stating it, a useful perspective in developing informal learning.

Motivation

For a heutagogical approach to creativity to succeed, motivation is required to provide self-determination in learning. I need to understand why students would want to engage with the work and learning. The idea of experiential learning described by Dewey (1938) becomes a leading theory in this proposal as a way of integrating a more holistic perspective on learning. The impulse of experience gives ideas their moving force, and ideas give direction to the impulse. From these, a more sophisticated and mature purpose develops, and most interestingly for me - an intrinsic motivation to learn more. I need to explore graphic design beyond the visual and into the experiential and immersive, using three dimensions and technology to provoke engagement.

I would like to explore moving the students from the extrinsic motivations of exams, grades and qualifications that shape the college experience towards the intrinsic motivations that allow them to independently seek gratification from what they see. Tingley (2018) states it is these intrinsic motivations that are more powerful and set the scene for more rewarding long-term learning experiences. Meyer (2000, cited in Negovan, Sterian and Colesniuc, 2014) encourages students to see learning as a process of personal change rather than external rewards. It is within this context that the benefits of intrinsic motivation can begin to inform learning. The constructivist approach offered by Kolb (1983) lends itself to this cycle of small accomplishments which create long-term feelings of success and a desire to learn more. This may place graphic design in a strong position to influence learning as it can do this in a non-linear way, without the formal structure of a teacher-led classroom. My work will build on Bruner's notion of learning as a process, and Kolb's notion of learning as a cycle to support motivation.

Museum and Exhibition Design

The final area that provides an applied context to my work is that of museum, gallery and exhibition design. Locker (2011) sees them as a springboard to enjoy a cultural experience, a starting point for people to orientate themselves physically and emotionally, influencing them in a positive way. These spaces are not passive but the educational messages in these settings can be more implicit than in formal teaching, perhaps leading to more personal responses. Piehl (2021) is also an influence in explorative spaces that make knowledge more inclusive through choice and flexibility.

Potential significance of the study

As we live and adapt to the pandemic, education has the chance to reflect and move forward in new ways. Colleges as places of learning are becoming more flexible, a sense of place could be under threat, or it could shape a new type of learning that requires less boundaries and structures. The concept of this project has created interest across the College and its University partners with a number of opportunities for transferring the knowledge gained to the other areas including local authority, schools and private training providers.

Ethics

As a practice-based empirical research project, I have considered the implications of safeguarding, confidentiality, competency, GDPR, consent and anonymity. The open and informal nature of the experiments has issues to consider where not all of the interactions can be controlled. It can be difficult to control those in scope which will include anyone within the building, not only students but perhaps younger visitors, older students on evening classes, and staff which offers a challenge in how consent is obtained. The investigation will focus on my own creative interpretations of relevant research, which will have a big impact on what students will be exposed to. Therefore, there is an issue that this is likely to be rather subjective and could be seen as
imposing views on others. These ideas in informal spaces, informed by personal research may not align with the formal curriculum. Therefore, it is important that the content is presented to the Research, Scholarship and Ethics committee at the College where further rigour can challenge my methodology. With students aged 16 and 17, although not defined as children in the context of research, my methodology can adopt the same ethical approach as with vulnerable groups, children as participants and potentially the filming of children. I will also need to consider how information will be shared with students, parents and others.

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PAULINE OSBORNE
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Bridgwater and Taunton College Multi-Academy Trust

The Director for Fair Access at the Office for Students, the Regulator for Higher Education, asked the Head of Higher Education at Bridgwater and Taunton College to write a case study. It was aimed to be published as an example of effective practice alongside the Insight Event: 'Raising attainment, improving access, securing success', that the Office for Students ran on 7th April 2022. It was an event to explore the shared challenges and opportunities faced by schools, colleges, universities and third sector organisations as they work together to raise attainment and improve opportunities. The event enabled the new Director to set out his vision for how Higher Education Providers can do more to achieve these aims.

The Office for Students wished to share examples of different ways in which it is possible for HE Providers to engage with schools in order to support increased attainment at school level. Although a number of colleges nationally are part of a Multi-Academy Trust, it emerged that it is very unusual for a college to be the main sponsor of a Trust. That is why they asked for a case study to be written to explain why and how the College became involved in a Multi-Academy Trust and what the outcome of this engagement has been. A number of examples of effective practice were provided to the sector at the event in April, and delegates were also invited to explore the further examples published on the same day on the Office for Students (2022) website. This included the one below, written as requested by Pauline Osborne, Head of Higher Education, University Centre Somerset at Bridgwater and Taunton College.

Introduction

Bridgwater and Taunton College is based in Somerset with three campus sites: Bridgwater, Taunton and Cannington. The College has in excess of 20,000 students, of whom approximately 1,000 study at Level 4 and above on HNC, HND, Foundation Degree, BA, BSc, BEng, Cert Ed and

PGCE courses. These range from nuclear engineering (in support of the local Hinkley Point C nuclear power development) to the new nursing degrees that support Somerset NHS Foundation Trust. They also include agricultural management (on the College's own farm) and digital, as well as creative arts, and a wide range of other sectors and disciplines. In addition, there are professional courses and apprenticeships at Level 4 and above.

The College works in partnership with four universities that validate higher education provision at University Centre Somerset, which is part of Bridgwater and Taunton College. These are the Open University, the University of the West of England Bristol, the University of Plymouth and Oxford Brookes University, in addition to Pearson.

The College's vision, mission and values explain why it became involved in setting up what has become a Multi-Academy Trust. These include transforming the lives of its students and inspiring its communities to achieve success by creating exciting partnerships with its students, staff, community and employers, while being responsive to student, employer and community needs.

In line with these principles, the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust was founded in 2012 as a venture sponsored by the College to improve the attainment level and life chances of local children in deprived catchment areas, including one that is currently designated an Opportunity Area.

The Trust has grown since its inception and now includes nursery provision as well as three primary schools, three secondary schools and one joint primary and secondary school.

The challenge

The challenge in 2012 was that three local schools were struggling, two of them having been designated as 'inadequate' by Ofsted. One of these was the closest feeder school to the College, in one of the most deprived wards in Somerset.

The issue was therefore to find a way to improve the children's attainment level and aspirations. A decision was taken to establish an academy, bringing the original three schools together in 2012.

Thereafter the challenge remained to raise standards, achievement, confidence and aspirations, with a focus on inspiring children from these deprived wards and making them aware of what opportunities are available to them, in order to provide greater life chances and assist social mobility.

The approach

Given its mission and values, the principal and governors of the College could not stand by with inadequate school provision locally and not do something to help. The College has always been rooted in its community with its aim to transform people's lives, and in 2012 the moment came to act.

The Trust started with three schools, which merged to become one academy and has since grown to become a Multi-Academy Trust made up of seven schools.

Bridgwater and Taunton College (BTC) sponsors the Trust and is involved in it at a strategic and governance level. However, the Trust has its own chief executive and runs independently from the College. Each school has its own identity, while subscribing to the principles and values of the Trust. As stated on its website, the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust (2022a):

> *...exists with the single legal and moral purpose – to advance education for public benefit. As such we are a group of likeminded schools working in collaboration as one entity to improve and maintain high educational standards within and beyond our own schools. Our core purpose is to ensure that* ***Every Child Achieves.***

This objective fits extremely well with the College's mission and there is therefore a clear synergy between the College and the Trust.

In practical terms, the chief executive and principal of Bridgwater and Taunton College is the chair of governors of the Trust. Two other senior managers from the College are chairs of governors of two of the schools in the Trust. Their role as governors is one of critical challenge, holding to account for quality and supporting the development of strategy while taking account of the culture, aspirations and ethos of an independent Trust. This is done by strong governance to support the leadership of the Trust, in the context of understanding the local community in Somerset.

The chief executive of the Trust is able to call on the College, as and when appropriate, to assist with raising the aspirations of the Trust's young people, by giving real life examples of how it is possible to achieve the careers of their choice through high level attainment at school. An example of this is staff from the College going into schools to explain about what is on offer in post-16 education, as this is such a fast-moving sector and it is difficult for teachers in schools to keep up to date with what is happening beyond their own remit.

Talks have covered topics such as the development and running of T-levels and apprenticeships. Apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships are a particularly important offer for those from low-income backgrounds. They provide a salary and the development of skills, knowledge and behaviour, as well as employment, and a qualification that can lead to a career in their sector of choice.

The links between the schools at each level mean that there is a strong understanding among school staff of the environment from which pupils are arriving and the institutions to which they progress. This joined-up approach is very helpful for smooth transition from nursery to primary and on to secondary level. The importance is recognised of fluid transition, which removes barriers so that students can make effective progress. The approach in place develops the knowledge of teachers in the schools to understand more about each phase, from nursery to primary and secondary, so they are not working in silos.

The Trust leadership team and schools work effectively to raise standards and provide opportunities for children to be in a position to progress on to further study once they leave school after the age of 16. This is often at the College, on A-level and other further education courses including T-levels, and on again into higher education, both nationally and at University Centre Somerset within the College. The fact that it is possible for children to progress from aged two at nursery, to primary, secondary, further education and higher education all within two linked institutions leads to smooth transitions, which are important for some and support social mobility. With the assistance of outreach work from universities with A-level and further education students at the College, there was a 6 per cent increase (now 15 per cent) in students who secured a place at a Russell Group university in 2021-22, and one student who secured a place at the University of Oxford to study English.

The Somerset Uni Connect Team, Next Steps South West, which has a base at University Centre Somerset, works both within the individual schools making up the Trust and with target students at Bridgwater and Taunton College to raise awareness, understanding and confidence to progress into higher education. Staff delivering degree programmes at University Centre Somerset have run masterclasses and taster sessions to pupils at the schools, facilitated and co-ordinated by Next Steps South West alongside a number of other interventions. These have been very well received and evaluated through the Uni Connect project.

There is considerable strength in the collaboration between multiple partners including Bridgwater and Taunton College, University Centre Somerset, the Trust, individual schools within the Trust, Next Steps South West and Somerset County Council.

The Trust itself, as an independent body, has undertaken many initiatives to support the children in its care, in line with its declared aims. A recent example is developing the Get Ahead programme, to provide live evening classes for missed lessons from Key Stage 1 through primary and secondary levels. The culture that has been developed is a culture for the greater good and this initiative fits in that ethos. The Get Ahead programme is open to any student anywhere, being publicly available and free for anyone to engage in.

'Every Child Achieves' is the focus of the Trust (Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust (2022a). An example of this is that the Trust has a clearly articulated approach to permanent exclusion – no pupil is permanently excluded. Instead, there is a focus on finding ways to support those pupils who need intervention and support in a setting that is right for them. This is linked to Apex West, a centre in West Somerset for those who find it hard to thrive and achieve in mainstream education. This centre supports young people and works with centres in other schools, creating a culture to genuinely help young people in Somerset to achieve (Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust, 2022b).

Evaluation activity

The evaluation is carried out in a number of different ways. These range from external audits of governance, which take place as part of the standard audit cycle, to evaluation activities by Next Steps South West, in line with the requirements of the Office for Students for Uni Connect funded projects.

The Director of Education for the Trust reports to each school's governing body, providing an overview of the school and its progress at regular intervals. This is robustly questioned and challenged as appropriate at governor level.

Any evaluation is able to use the evidence of the GCSE outcomes over time in the Trust, as well as the progression of students from given postcodes in deprived wards. The type of evaluation possible is therefore in line with Type 1 (Narrative) and Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry).

The result

Having started with schools designated as inadequate by Ofsted in 2012, all secondary schools in the Trust have been in the top 10 highest performing schools in Somerset since 2019. The original 'inadequate' schools in 2012 are now rated by Ofsted as being 'good' providers.

The milestones and targets for GCSE results within the Multi-Academy Trust (included in previous University Centre Somerset access agreements and the first access and participation plan) were met.

There is great strength in the collaboration between Bridgwater and Taunton College, University Centre Somerset and the Bridgwater and Taunton Academy Trust. The strength of the governance supports the independent nature of the Trust to make its own decisions for the young people in its care. This has led to significantly improved attainment at school level and successful progression to further and higher education over time.

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Developing literacy skills in post-16 learners through serious casual gaming

Context

In 2017, a £2000 RSA grant was secured to undertake an innovative and creative learning Royal Society of Arts funded project through the University of South Wales. The project collaborated with students in the design and development of serious retro games, as an effort to develop literacy skills in participating post-16 students.

Literacy and English skills development continue to be a core challenge throughout all stages of education, particularly in Further Education. We wanted to share this project more widely within the University Centre Somerset to gain insight into its relevance in 2022. We hope through sharing this project to gather present-day perspectives and assess if the project is worth replicating and continuing at Bridgwater and Taunton College. We feel the Research and Scholarship Showcase 2019 - 2022 is the ideal platform to accomplish this and welcome any thoughts, opinions or insights you can offer.

Introduction

A key priority in Welsh education for many years has been to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills at every level (Dauncey, 2013). Many educational institutions have achieved this through embedding these skills into all curricula through Government set frameworks (Welsh Government, 2008). The use of digital literacy and technology in education is also now becoming part of everyday teaching and learning and as a result of a curriculum and assessment review in Wales (Donaldson, 2015) digital literacy is now being implemented using much similar frameworks (Welsh Government, 2016; Qualifications Wales 2016). Given these changes it seems sensible to explore the possible marriage of literacy and numeracy skills development with digital literacy and technology; and to investigate the potential impact this union could have in learning and teaching.

Engagement in literacy and numeracy skills development has proven to be a challenging task in post-16 education. Many learners in the post-16 sector lack the literacy and numeracy skills required for their chosen level of study. Nearly all these learners have been taught literacy and numeracy through a variety of methods in compulsory education with only small, incremental improvements being made. This has led to learners lacking in motivation and confidence when it comes to their own skills development with confidence potentially having a significant impact on their attainment (Parsons, Croft and Harrison, 2009). Now, through the use of technology there is a potential to re-engage the 21st century digital native learner (Prensky, 2001) in literacy and numeracy skills development.

In recent years, with the rapid development of smart devices including mobile phones, watches and tablets; internet mobile use and connectivity has grown exponentially. This has created a wide variety of mobile experiences being developed for a variety of sectors and in particular with mobile learning or m-learning in education (Xu, Buhalis and Weber, 2017). With this accessibility casual gaming has also risen, with people spending more time interacting with casual games than ever before (Yildirim, 2017). Casual games are games developed for those who would not be viewed as regular 'gamers'. These games are easy to access, quick to learn and require no expertise or a regular time commitment to play (Cheng, 2017).

The rise in m-learning and casual gaming has allowed for the development of educational gamification. Gamification can be defined as the use of gaming features in non-game applications to increase engagement and motivation in a variety of activities (Seixas da Rocha, Gomes and Filho de Melo, 2016). Research has demonstrated that gamification is highly effective in engaging learners in learning (Seixas da Rocha, Gomes and Filho de Melo, 2016) and that it has a positive impact on achievement and attitudes towards learning (Yildirim, 2017). However, gamification dynamics should be appropriate and learner perception of these dynamics should be explored in detail before commencing any gamification model development (Çakıroğlu *et al.*, 2017)

Gamification can be further defined as using game mechanics to motivate behaviours through game dynamics. Bunchball (2010) provides a framework (see Figure 1) defining the use of game mechanics and dynamics to influence behaviour. Game mechanics are the rules or rewards that are used in game play and are used to encourage enjoyment and challenge. Enjoyment and challenge being the emotions that the game developers ideally wish to evoke in players, these motivations are known as game dynamics.

Given that it has been identified that learner perception of game dynamics is a crucial factor when developing a gamification model (Çakıroğlu *et al.*, 2017) it would be sensible to work in collaboration with learners when developing any proposed gamification model. This will enable learners to have direct input into initial game concepts and the final games design, potentially ensuring that learner perceptions toward the final product will be positive, and potentially build learners competence and confidence.

Another area that blends games with education is known as 'serious gaming'. Serious games are those with a focus on changing behaviour or imparting knowledge, whilst traditional computer games are purely for entertainment (Xu, Buhalis and Weber, 2017). Research has identified that out of the three most common serious game types: simulations, quizzes and adventure games; adventure and quiz types have a more positive affective quality than that of simulations. It has also identified that quizzes are more effective and efficient regarding learning and retain engagement more than that of adventure games (Riemer and Schrader, 2015). Given that adventure and quiz type serious games are proven to have a positive impact on learning and engagement (Riemer and Schrader, 2015) when collaborating with learners, these themes could be explored further when devising game design concepts.

The rise in m-learning and gamification has also led to massive advancements in assessment for learning methods. Methods that enable learners to become active participants in their own development. Online interactive quiz platforms have allowed for rapid resource development for teaching practitioners, allowing for many formative assessment methods such as exit tickets and quizzes to become engaging activities. This allows practitioners and learners to monitor and track learning in real-time (Plump and LaRosa, 2017). An evaluation of game mechanics found in these popular online formative assessment tools (Riemer and Schrader, 2015) should also be explored with potential incorporation into game design concepts.

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction of basic human desires and game play. The green dots signify the primary desire a particular game mechanic fulfills, and the blue dots show the other areas that it affects.

In summary, the project wishes to explore the use of serious casual game ‘skill challenges’ that employ purposeful game mechanics/dynamics to motivate and engage learners in their own literacy development. Working in collaboration with learners will ensure a positive perception of the project and maximise their engagement. The project also has the potential to utilise the growing use of m-learning through its implementation and through employing the native digital literacy skills of learners. Existing literacy and numeracy frameworks such as Essential Skills Wales - which are already being implemented college-wide - should be considered as a foundation for scaffolding these targeted skills challenges.

Project Objectives

- To develop a scalable interactive gaming platform to disseminate targeted skill challenges to learners.
- To work collaboratively with learners to develop engaging skill challenges that employ digital literacy skills to develop literacy skills.
- To develop learners as active participants in tracking and developing their own skills through skill challenges.
- To monitor and track learner progression and engagement as a method of assessment for learning.
- To evaluate the impact of serious casual gaming on learners’ literacy skills development.

Project Outcomes

- Pilot groups for the platform to measure the impact on learners’ skills.
- An event for all teaching staff will take place to present the findings and outcomes of the project.
- It is anticipated that through successful piloting, the platform will be rolled out and become common practice cross-college.
- It is anticipated that the platform will enable learners to become more aware and more actively involved in the development of their own skills.
- The project will be monitored and measured through an analysis of data such as: learner focus groups, learner voice surveys, initial and skills assessments to measure student success and distance travelled.

Project Timeline and Learning Experience

June 2016: Learner Recruitment

At the start of the project the team advertised across college for willing participants to collaborate in the project. We used a variety of media including the college mobile app, a divisional text messaging service and printed posters displayed in computer rooms and open access areas to recruit possible volunteers. We received a high number of responses through marketing and organised an initial open forum to further inform potential participants about the project and what they could expect from being involved. After this initial forum, the final learner team consisted of 14 males and 1 female.

September 2016: Initial Design Concepts

The development team collaborated with learners to research conceptual ideas in preparation for the design and implementation stage. The team asked learners to consider appropriate games that would serve as a platform to enhance literacy skills through gamification. Learners were also presented the chosen gamification model (Bunchball, 2010) to discuss what game dynamics need to be evoked through the game platform. Reward, status, achievement and competition were the game dynamics highlighted as most significant by learners from the gamification model. This implied that points, levels, challenges and leaderboards were essential elements in the final design.

Research (Çakıroğlu *et al*., 2017) had identified that learner perception was a vital factor in the success of gamification with the experience of the project reinforcing these findings. Learners were actively engaged and truly motivated by having design input and overall perceptions of the initial concepts were overwhelmingly positive. Learners used a series of word clouds and design documents, collaborating with each other to produce initial design concepts.

October 2016 – November 2016: Refinement of Design Concepts

The initial platform design concept was refined and produced in preparation for the implementation stage. During this phase, learners were fully engaged and researched ideas that had potential to be carried forward to the design process. Learners collaborated with the development team in selecting a platform name - LITUP Games - and producing an accompanying online platform concept.

December 2016 – January 2017: Final Design Concepts

At this stage, some changes were made to the original concept and the project was slightly scaled back. This was to ensure that a meaningful dataset for analysis could be collected in the given timeframe. As we started working with the learners, we quickly realised what we originally set out to accomplish was slightly over-ambitious and realised that a scalable concept was not as important as getting an accurate and meaningful analysis of gamification and literacy. It was evident that learners themselves had growing concerns over the amount of time potential development could take.

As a result, we reduced the scale of the project from a 'gaming platform' to a series of targeted literacy games accessible through a simpler online platform, with the potential of developing a wider platform that would include skill challenge management and numeracy challenges in the future. This was much more appealing to both learners and the development team. The final literacy game designs were based on the original skill challenges designed by learners and mapped to the Essential Skills Wales Communications framework and included the chosen game mechanics/dynamics that were identified at the design stage.

The website designed with learners was implemented by the development team: www.litup.games (see *Figure 2*).

January 2017 – February 2017: Game Implementation

With the successful implementation of a suitable web platform the development of three serious games (see *Figure 3*) followed, each game with a different focus:

Astropun – an arcade style game aimed at improving punctuation. This game is based on retro science fiction style arcade games such as Space Invaders and Asteroids. Players shoot asteroids with the correct answer to a punctuation question.

Gram Prix – an arcade style game aimed at improving grammar. This game is based on racing style arcade games such as GP World and Road Blasters. Players guide a race car to the correct answer for a grammar question.

Spelling Bee – a quirky style arcade game aimed at improving spelling. The game is based around popular modern arcade style games such as Flappy Bird. Players need to click on the correct Bee to spell a word.

Figure 2: LITUP Games website

Feature	*Astropun*	*Gram Prix*	*Spelling Bee*
Platform	JavaScript/ HTML5	JavaScript/ HTML5	JavaScript/ HTML5
Points	●	●	●
Challenge	●	●	●
Leaderboards	●	●	●
Question Style	Mixed	Mixed	Anagram
Learning Style	VRK	VRK	VRK
Response Time	Untimed	5 seconds	Untimed
Accessibility	Web Enabled Device	Web Enabled Device	Web Enabled Device
Portability	Cross Platform	Cross Platform	Cross Platform
Game Genre	Fantasy	Sport	Puzzle
Control Interface	Button (pointer / touch or Keyboard (keypress)	Button (pointer / touch or Keyboard (keypress)	Button (pointer / touch)

These games were developed in-house by the project team using multiple development platforms and programming languages including GameMaker Studio Pro, HTML5, JavaScript, PHP and MySQL. The online platform - www.litup.games - provided a frontend from which learners could access each of the three games. Each time a user logged on a session was created which monitored their play time, which game was being played and the scores achieved. This allowed not only the creation of real time leaderboards for each game but also the collection of game activity data for evaluation. Learners beta tested each game using a variety of web enabled devices including smart phones. This allowed the overall user experience for the game to be fully evaluated from the learners' perspective.

Figure 3: Actual game content

March 2017: Pre-Pilot Evaluation

The project was piloted by 60 male learners aged 16 - 19. Previous research (Yildirim, 2017) identified that gamification has a more positive impact on male learners, and given the main aim of the project was to evaluate the impact of gamification on literacy, a sample of male learners was used in piloting and evaluation.

Pre-pilot evaluation was undertaken using a variety of methods including focus groups and confidence logs. Confidence logs were used to identify current confidence levels towards basic literacy skills in the pilot group learners (see *Figure 4*).

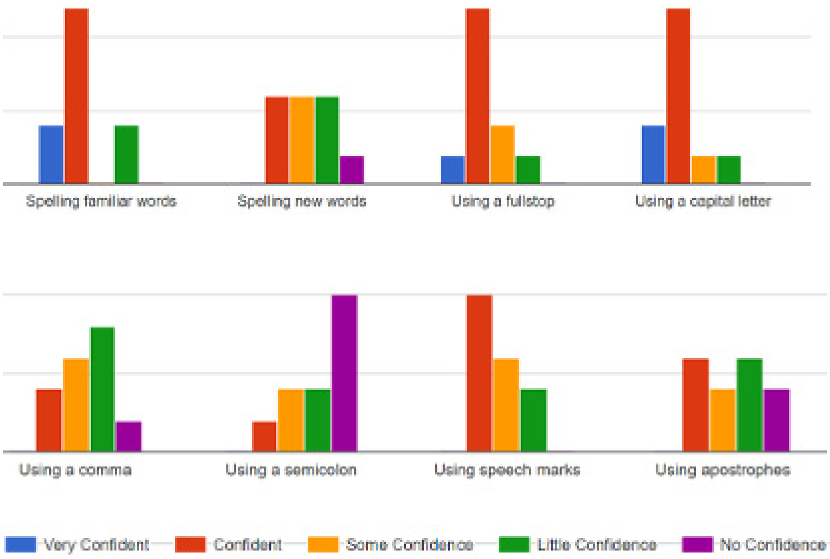

Figure 4: Sample of Pre-Pilot Confidence Logs

The pre-pilot evaluation also employed the use of an Essential Skills Wales Communications Confirmatory Test and a written literacy activity (See *Appendix D*) to serve as initial assessments of the current literacy levels held by pilot sample learners.

April 2017 – May 2017: Pilot and Post-Pilot Evaluation

The pilot groups were given access to three games focussing on spelling, punctuation and grammar. There were no set times for them to use the games and they were encouraged to play through any device, anytime and anywhere; similar to any other form of casual gaming. There was designated time available during weekly one hour tutorial sessions where they traditionally develop literacy and numeracy skills using various resources. The online platform monitored each users' gameplay activity and progress.

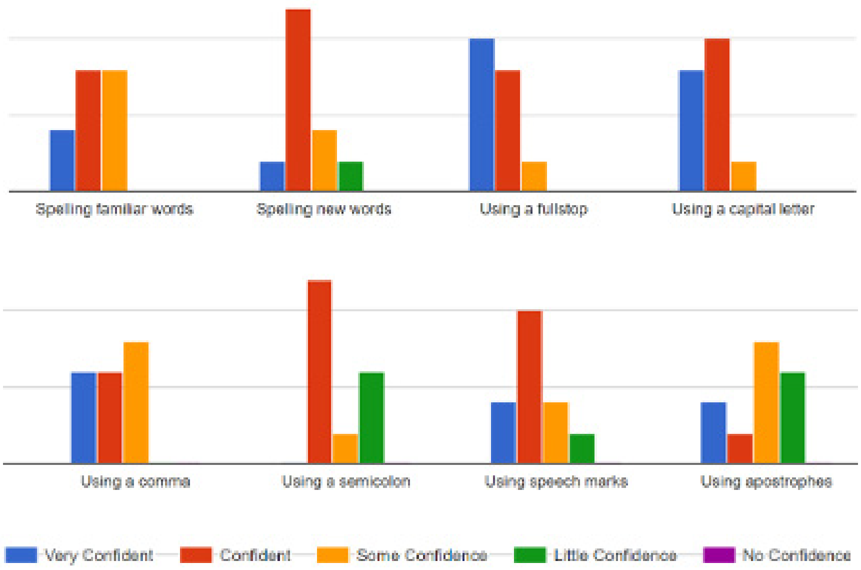

Figure 5: Sample of Post-Pilot Confidence Logs

Post-pilot evaluation was undertaken again using a variety of methods including focus groups and confidence logs (see *Figure 5*). These were used to identify confidence levels towards basic literacy skills after prolonged interaction with the games.

Post-pilot evaluation was also conducted using another appropriate ESW Communications confirmatory test and written literacy activity. Comparative analysis was undertaken on pre and post pilot evaluation data enabling the analysis of the games' impact on learners' literacy skills to measure the distance travelled during the pilot. Learner analytics gathered from the users' gaming activity also underwent quantitative analysis.

This gaming activity analysis found that each time a learner re-played a game their ability and score increased - just like it would when playing a traditional computer game played for enjoyment. This demonstrated that the learners were learning the rules of the game and fully understood the questions by offering the correct answers. Essentially the learners were repeatedly applying skills and knowledge to deepen their understanding and further their development in literacy.

A final focus group and voting poll was held to gather a final evaluation of the overall learner perceptions and learning experiences of the project.

All learners who participated in the project, demonstrated greater confidence, engagement in literacy and found the competitiveness of the games captivating. Learner literacy levels showed enhancement through the use of serious literacy gaming although learner confidence towards literacy is what significantly improved most. One of the main findings demonstrated that learners were much more aware and conscious of their own spelling, punctuation and grammar. For example, when we asked one learner what they had learnt they simple stated: "I learned where to put a comma." This may not seem like a vast improvement to many, but for a post-16 learner who has been in education for over twelve years, this could be a personal breakthrough.

June 2017: Dissemination

After a successful pilot, the project will be rolled out college-wide with the potential of conducting a wider evaluation which will take into consideration both male and female learners. The project outcomes will be disseminated to college staff in the form of a seminar and through the sharing of this written report. It is hoped that in the future the project findings will also be peer reviewed and published, with the intention of attending external academic conferences in the coming year.

Lessons Learned and Future Thinking

When measuring the impact and success of the project, it was clear that there is a good case for the use of serious games in the development of literacy skills in post-16 education.

A key lesson learned in the life of the project was the benefit of learner participation in the design, development and evaluation of the end products. Engaging learners early on in the project meant they were able to offer their unique and essential perspective on each aspect of the project. Learner participation on this scale also had a significant impact on ensuring the project was perceived in a positive light by learners, potentially playing a considerable part in the project's overall success. It in turn boosted the confidence the learners felt overall in enhancing their literacy skills development.

The final focus group highlighted that 95% of learners' confidence levels improved in their basic literacy skills, with 100% of learners feeding back that they enjoyed the experience of m-learning and gamification; with these learners wanting more opportunities to learn through games. These findings suggest that the learning requirements of learners could have potentially evolved. Educators need to adapt their pedagogy to ensure they make use of methods that prove to be both effective and engaging to a 21st century digital native.

Future developments for this project could include the incorporation of an online data visualisation dashboard. This setup would allow both educators and learners to gain a visual perspective of the progress they are making, giving educators a quick overall view of progress and give learners a more appealing method to track their skill progression. Based on the positive outcomes of the project, further developments could also include elements that could accurately assess the progression of learners in order to adapt the games to the specific level of each learner. Furthermore, utilising existing frameworks, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, would allow for a more dynamic tool for initial assessments as well as a more structured method in measuring distance travelled by learners.

For further study, as the project focussed on the literacy levels of students in post-16 education, future work could look to encompass other essential skills i.e. numeracy, and the impact that serious gaming can have on the assessment and development of these skills. Other aspects of literacy should also be explored including reading, writing and comprehension. With the recent developments in tablet/stylus hardware and handwriting recognition software, there is enormous potential for serious games being developed to enhance 'physical' literacy skills such as handwriting.

As the pilot sample of learners comprised of male students only, future projects may find it beneficial to see if similar positive results are noted in mixed gender/female test cohorts. A more longitudinal study would also allow for a deeper understanding of the impact serious games can have on skills development over a longer period.

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RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP SHOWCASE 2019-2022

Good Practice Articles

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LRC Book Club - the future became virtual

'From conception to launch by Adèle Roberts'

As the UK went into lockdown, working and studying from home quickly became the norm in 2020. Consequently, it became clear that the future of library service initiatives, such as our face-to-face book club, would need a fresh approach in order to prevail off-campus.

The on-campus book club ran once a month and had been established for several years as a wellbeing and literacy initiative. It provided an opportunity for students and staff to relax, enjoy a drink, and share their passion for reading in a friendly environment outside of the classroom. As Shaffi (2021) points out, 'reading is often thought of as a solitary activity, but for most book lovers, there's nothing better than sharing the joy of the written word with fellow bibliophiles'. However, in light of the pandemic and subsequent requirements to socially distance, the on-campus book club could no longer operate.

The charity organisation Mind (2021) reported that 'nearly one in three adults (30%) and over one in three young people (34%) said that their mental health had got much worse during the pandemic'. Therefore, it became more important than ever to ensure that the LRC continued to provide the opportunity for students and staff to engage in this activity, to help support mental health and wellbeing. According to Lewin (2021), 'clinical psychologist Caitlin Sopp agrees that book club offers a wealth of benefits … sharing your thoughts in a group environment can build confidence and boost self-esteem, while reading itself is also beneficial for emotional wellbeing… "Reading is a form of mindfulness"'. So, in order to continue to offer this activity, the LRC team decided to reconstruct the club in a new virtual domain, and the Digital Book Club was created!

Research on how to create a digital book club started in April 2020. General advice was gathered from a range of websites like the Penguin Classics guide on 'How to set up an online book club' (Shaffi, 2021), and it was evident that many decisions would need to be made before it could be launched. In May 2020, LRC staff provided feedback on the initial ideas for creating a digital book club. The general consensus was to keep it simple and unified.

At that time, a variety of platforms were available to choose from: Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams and Blackboard Collaborate, to list a few. After careful consideration, it was agreed that Microsoft Teams would offer the most functionality and greatest capacity, as it allowed for more than just announcing books and creating meeting dates, and it could also accommodate multiple users. Microsoft Teams enabled us to create a range of channels and allowed us to moderate these for public or staff only access (private channels are indicated by a lock symbol).

Image taken from Digital Book Club Microsoft Teams channel

The development of this homepage needed careful planning. It was decided that four channels would be created. The General channel now provides a space to vote on book titles. In June 2020, LRC staff trialled the embedded version of Microsoft Teams 'voting poll' to ensure it was fit for purpose. However, this type of pre-embedded 'quick poll form' was too restrictive, as it only allowed us to share a limited amount of polling options (in our case, book titles to vote for). Consequently, it was decided that the full version of Microsoft Forms would be a more viable option, as it offered staff the flexibility to create more book title options, which could be embedded into the channel as a link for readers to cast their vote. The General channel also provides a space to create announcements and list upcoming events, as well as keeping a record of the books that have been read each month. Notably, within the files area of this channel is our 'BTC Book Club Guide to Amazon Alternatives.' This guide lists a variety of stockists: local independent book shops, online retailers, organisations, and public libraries, where students and staff can choose to either borrow or purchase their books. Digital books are also recommended.

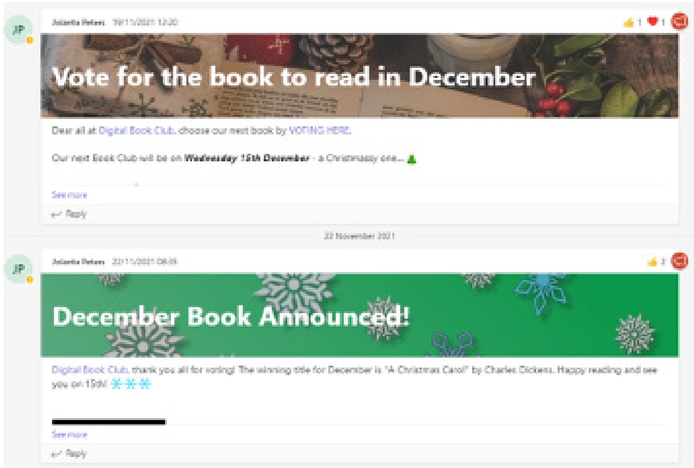


Image taken from Digital Book Club Microsoft Teams channel

The Book Blog channel provides a discussion forum for those wanting to discuss books further, make recommendations or write book reviews. In its conception LRC staff had agreed that if users can influence the development of the Digital Book Club, this could result in greater participation numbers. The monthly Digital Book Club meetings which run from 12.30pm - 1.30pm on a Wednesday, are all held in the Book Club Meetings channel; this provides a clear link which allows students and staff to access the online club with ease. The Staff Discussion channel was created so that staff members could discuss any issues relating to the Digital Book Club in private. This channel was designed to keep the area uncluttered for the users.

In August 2020, the Digital Book Club was trialled within our own team, across the three campuses. A range of potential books were proposed, based on their size (number of pages), reader feedback, star ratings and accessibility, for users to choose from. Our first book was *The Catch* by T.M. Logan, a real page-turner that has you guessing "whodunit?" until the end. The Team site ran smoothly and proved viable. It was agreed that one staff member from each campus LRC would take turns to chair the Digital Book Club. In September 2020, the Digital Book Club was successfully launched to the whole college.

'Discussions of book choices so far… By Kirsten Wilshire-Preston'

Since then, we have enjoyed reading a wide selection of books covering a range of genres, cultures and themes. Our choices have included Richard Osman's debut novel, *The Thursday Murder Club*, Stephen Fry's retelling of ancient Greek myths in *Mythos*, as well as coming-of-age novels (*Looking for Alaska* by John Green) and psychological thrillers (*The Family Upstairs* by Lisa Jewell). Indeed, Cressida Cowell (2021) author and Waterstones Children's Laureate, points out that 'books are windows into other worlds.'

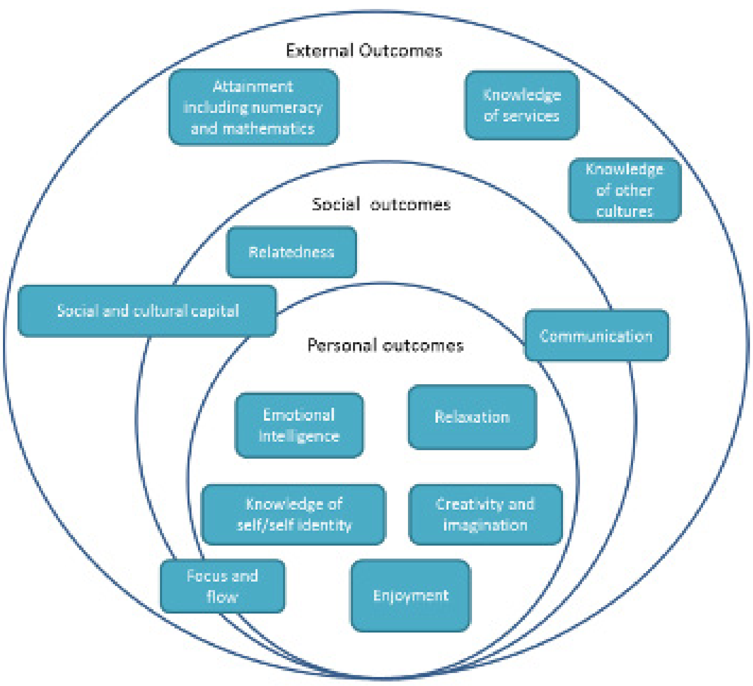
Our book selections have offered us windows into important periods of the past, including the 1918 influenza pandemic in Dublin, Ireland (*The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue) and Nazi Germany during World War II (*The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak). We also glimpsed a disturbing vision of a futuristic dystopian society courtesy of *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. Events, ideas and values within each novel were found to be directly relevant and relatable to the current state of the world.

Two powerful debut novels offered us windows into different cultures. *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, the debut novel of Nigerian writer Abi Daré, follows the story of Adunni, a teenage girl born into a rural Nigerian village, who is determined to find her 'louding voice' and get her education. Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* was inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and tells the story of Starr Carter, an African-American teenager, as she tries to stand up for what is right after witnessing the fatal shooting of a childhood friend by a white police officer. Both novels address important themes and current issues, including gender inequality, racism, justice, empowerment and activism. Another Book Club choice, *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig, directly addresses mental health struggles, as well as the meaning of choice and regret. In this novel Nora Seed is given the opportunity to explore alternate versions of her life following a suicide attempt.

Reading regularly for pleasure has many benefits, including enhancing empathy, understanding of the self, and the ability to understand one's own and others' identities (The Reading Agency, 2022).

The monthly Digital Book Club meetings are open to everyone and give participants the opportunity to participate in a discussion on the selected book. The meetings provide a chance for members to interact with other book lovers, listen to other points of view and reflect upon their own personal experiences. The meetings also allow time for participants to talk about books they are currently reading or would like to read next. From this discussion, suggestions for the next month's read are put forward and collated into a questionnaire to give everyone a chance to vote.

Despite students having now returned to study on campus, the book club is still running in its digital form. This has allowed us to continue the book club as a cross-campus initiative involving all three campuses and has the added advantage of allowing people to attend from the comfort of their own home if they are not attending College that day.



Literature review: the impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment (The Reading Agency, 2015, p.15).

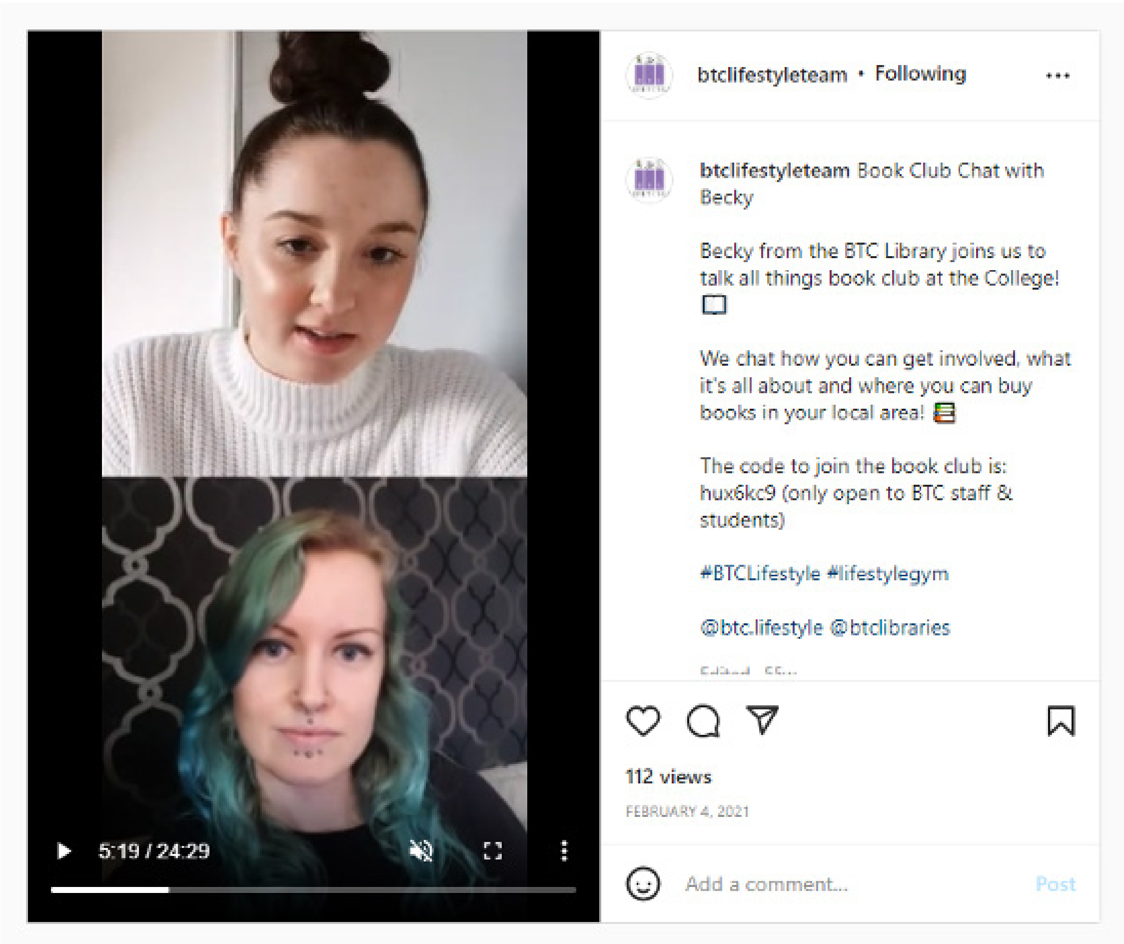
'Reflections on the Instagram Live session by Becky Worthington'

In order to promote the Digital Book Club to as wide a student audience as possible, in January 2021, a collaboration with the BTC Lifestyle Team was proposed resulting in an Instagram Live broadcast. Instagram Live allows you to broadcast to your Instagram followers in real time and as the host, you can invite others to join you in the chat, creating a fun and engaging way to share information. This seemed like an ideal way to promote the book club in an informal setting and using a form of media most students were already comfortable with.

Our BTC Lifestyle Team Leader, Molly Arden, had already hosted a few Live sessions which had gone well and was enthusiastic to help the Digital Book Club team prepare and set up a session together. A slot in the Lifestyle social media calendar was booked and the Digital Book Club team discussed what to cover during the live session. We decided to explain how the book club works, how students can join and the variety of genres we read. Also, we wanted to discuss how the books are chosen, explaining that we use a poll with suggestions from members, as allowing every member a chance to suggest and vote for a title is an important aspect of our book club. It was decided that it should be more of a chat about these topics, instead of a direct Q&A session, as this would keep it lighter in tone and resemble more how our book club discussions flow.

On the day of the Live session, I joined Molly from the libraries Instagram account (@btclibraries) and the twenty-five minutes of the session flew by. I managed to cover all the topics we had discussed as a team beforehand and another member of the library team, was on hand to add in useful information, like the Team joining code, in the chat of the Live session. Overall, although it was a new experience for me, and one that was slightly intimidating, with help from the Digital Book Club team and Molly, the session went smoothly, and we had positive comments from others who had watched live or caught up via the btclifestyleteam Instagram page.

The Digital Book Club is also promoted widely via posters, other social media, LRC inductions and Librarian 'Pop-ins' which reinforces the idea that it is a regular part of College enrichment. As a result of this LRC team collaboration, students and staff have been able to continue joining together with fellow bibliophiles to relax and talk about books. Indeed, the creation of the Digital Book Club has enabled this wellbeing initiative to prevail, and long may it continue!



A still from Instagram Live video

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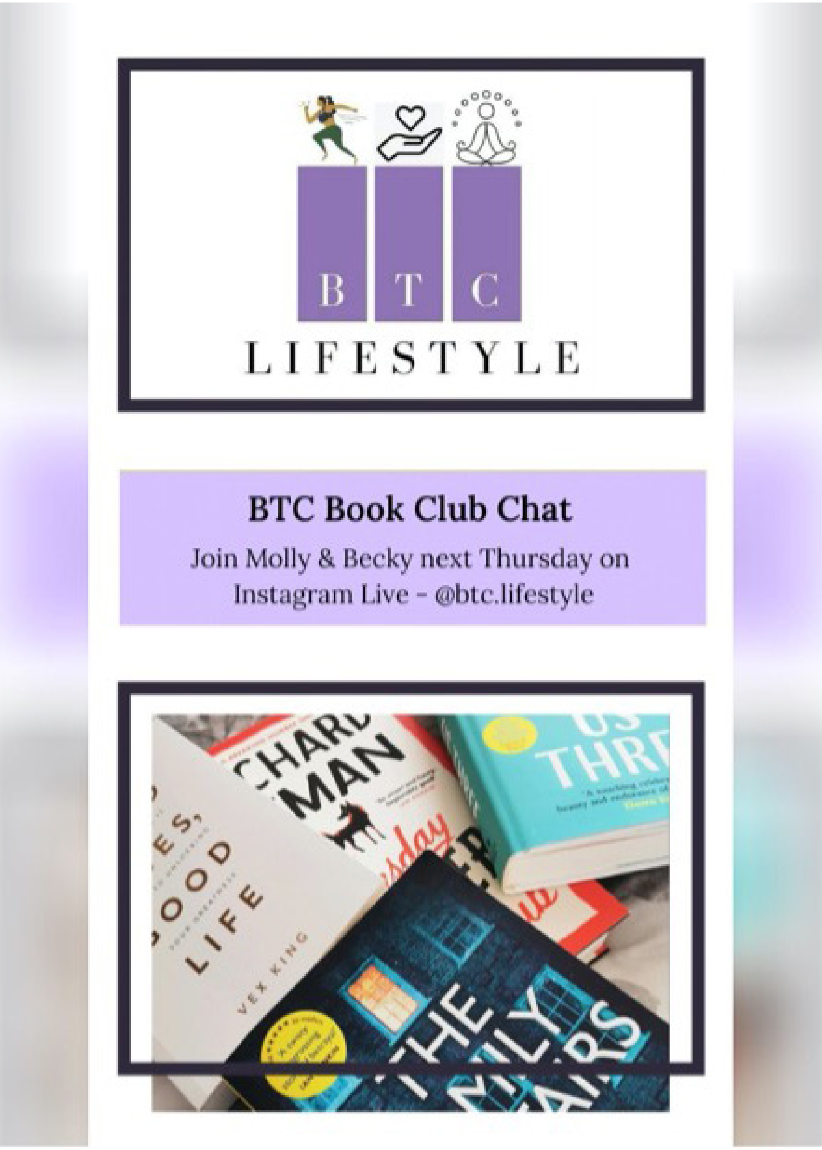

Social media flyer advertising the Digital Book Club chat on Instagram

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DOMINIC HODGES
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Digital practices at BTC

Digital technologies are the electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store and process data. Well known examples include social media, online games, multimedia and mobile phones. Digital learning is any type of activity that uses technology, and it can be embedded into all curriculum areas. BTC took part in the national College Collaboration Fund (CCF) with Wiltshire College which set out to investigate ways of improving our use of these technologies and develop our digital practices at BTC. The project was a success and had an impact on 93 members of staff in total, which included teaching staff and colleagues from the library and Information and Guidance teams. This article provides a summary of some of those topics that were used.

OneNote is one of the best teaching and learning tools available today if you make effective use of it. The digital notebook automatically saves and syncs notes as you work and is a great way to organise note-taking preferences for you and your learners. Another smart feature of OneNote is the ability to access, collaborate and share content with all learners which is a great way for learners to learn independently after sessions are over. Notes can be reviewed and referred to for deeper understanding. You can access notes easily and share them with other learners to contribute in real-time through peer collaboration. OneNote can be accessed from a laptop, tablet and mobile phone so learners can have access to every note taken at any time. OneNote has gained many new features designed with education in mind and it is free for learners to use via the Microsoft Teams app.

Online quizzes are interactive and fun to play. They are based on a method of learning called Active Recall which embeds knowledge in the long-term memory more effectively than passive learning. There are several examples of these interactive apps that can be used like Quizizz, Nearpod and Quizlet. All of these apps use the gamification of quiz-based learning for a simple yet powerful experience for both lecturers and learners. The apps are very easy to use and most importantly are very engaging.

- Quizizz operates like a gameshow with a question-and-answer platform that works across the different web browsers and devices. Learning is more fun with the game-based interactions and learners are able to work through a quiz using their own device. The ability to take a quiz privately or as a class is a useful option. This allows you to assign individual quizzes suited to each student, or to work as a class, getting feedback on how the class is managing with a single subject across the group.

- Nearpod gives real-time insights into learner understanding through interactive lessons, videos, gamification and activities – all in a single platform. With Nearpod, the same lesson can be launched three ways, meaning it works no matter how you're teaching, synchronous or asynchronous.

- Quizlet Live is an in-class game that teachers can use to help students review information while working together in teams. The game randomly sorts students into teams to match terms and definitions, and the first team to correctly answer all of the questions wins! Quizlet Live is fully focused on accuracy over speed. If a team answers any question wrong, they have to start over from the beginning. This ensures your students' competitive spirit will not override the need to answer correctly.

What makes these quizzes easy to use from a learner's perspective is that all they need is an access code (and good WiFi).

Reading Progress is a free tool built into Teams and is designed to support and track reading fluency in class. Learners can record their reading on camera and submit it to the teacher. Data from the reading is automatically collected and organised (which means no marking ☺). Educators can give learners feedback on words that they may have missed, added, repeated or mispronounced. I have found that it is an effective way of learners covering content before a lesson that can be assessed by a starter task, however, I would suggest that less is more, as learners have become less engaged when they read longer pieces of text. Reading Progress can be assigned to learners through the Assignments tab in Microsoft Teams.

A final example is the use of QR codes in the classroom. They are a great way to make digital content and links easy to access, as well as being customisable and editable. With most learners now owning a smartphone, they can scan the QR codes to do things like finding quiz answers and accessing links to tasks. These QR codes can be embedded into PowerPoint presentations or on to Sway links which can enhance classroom learning making it more interactive and fun. QR codes can be generated on a few different websites by just inputting the website or file and downloading the created QR code. Additionally, it saves on paperwork – something highly beneficial for the College's 'Make it Green' scheme.

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EL DINGSDALE

International and Education Projects Co-ordinator
Quality, Teaching and Digital Innovation

The Suscop project

The Suscop project is aimed at investigating sustainable cooking for the planet. This is an international cooperation with England, Spain and Finland in which teachers and students learn to cook with alternative proteins.

The Suscop project has been working to create an e-book, with a variety of recipes and menus that have been carefully designed by Suscop partner schools in the hope of encouraging students to use alternative proteins.

A newsletter was designed to share and look at the different schools' approaches, to cooking recipes from the "Train the Trainer" short course. Half of the recipes contain insects, and another half other types of alternative proteins.

One of the teachers from the cooking department at Da Vinci College in the Netherlands, wrote:

> *This project has been running for a few years now. The goal is to introduce students to alternative proteins in the form of legumes, seaweed, but also insects, for example. The e-book with the recipes will be released in early 2022. It contains recipes with alternative proteins, made by teachers and students of the SUSCOP project* (van den Broek, 2022).

College staff at the "Train the Trainer" event and their culinary creations

Da Vinci College

Part of the project is the 'Train the Trainer' workshop. We have introduced our colleagues at Da Vinci College to the programme, so that they will soon be able to give training/ lessons to students about working with alternative proteins themselves.

Michel Visser, an ex-chef and now a cooking lecturer at Da Vinci College, is one of the participants. He gives guest lectures at Da Vinci College, examines, and supervises students taking part in the Skills Heroes competition which provides employers, colleges, and independent training providers with a proven method of upskilling and developing young people from all backgrounds and abilities.

As consumers, we still know too little about eating insects. Even in the role as a cook we can still learn a lot from working with alternative protein. If we know more about it, it is also easier to apply in practice. We can soon teach students more about working with alternative proteins. I do believe it is important that cooking with insects is not used as a gimmick, but as a replacement for meat.

> *Before I came to Da Vinci College I worked as a cook for 15 years, the last year as a chef in a restaurant in Rotterdam. But then Corona came along and unfortunately, I had to leave. That opened new opportunities and I ended up at the Da Vinci College. I hadn't worked with insects before. And to be honest, I wasn't very excited either. It's a mental thing: it sounds weird and doesn't look appealing. But eating insects it was actually pretty good, the taste was not bad at all. In addition, it is now clear to me that it can no longer go on like this and that we must take better care of the earth. I really don't always do that, but this could be a start. In any case, the awareness is there* (Visser, 2021, quoted in van den Broek, 2022).

Bridgwater and Taunton College

For the "Train the Trainer" Event, we invited teachers from within the College who would be able to use the information in their teaching across various subjects. We had the team from hospitality, sports, nutrition, and public services join us in the Quantock Restaurant for a presentation on the project, explaining why we are doing it and what the outcome of the project will be. We then asked the delegates to do a blind taste test. Guessing the alternative proteins and giving their thoughts on it. Of course, this led to the obstacle of overcoming the YUK! factor and an engaging discussion of ways to conquer this.

We then taste-tested each other's dishes, giving feedback on the overall dish but also the inclusion of alternative proteins within them.

Following the tasting, we made our way into the kitchen, where the Sports, Nutrition and Public Services teachers paired up with a Hospitality teacher to cook a recipe from the Suscop e-book using alternative proteins including crickets, soya, grasshoppers, and mealworms.

There was a lot of positive conversation regarding bugs in future diets, the benefits of including them in certain dishes and how some of the teachers had been converted to exploring new ways of including protein in their diet from alternative sources. The mealworm gnocchi were an overwhelming success, with everyone going back for seconds!

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IRENA HUBBLE-BREZOWSKI
Associate Lecturer
MFL (Modern Foreign Languages)

Curriculum Influencers Project 2021: exploring the role of the HyperDoc for asynchronous delivery for French A-Level

Rationale

Before I started teaching during lockdown, I had not considered the use of asynchronous delivery. However, I had done some online learning myself through Future Learn and realised its potential. I could understand how encouraging it was to manage some your own learning and how interesting it was to meet other students online too.

After discussions with Jim Odams, a Teaching, Learning and Assessment lead at Bridgwater and Taunton College, on a topic for the project, I decided it would be asynchronous work. I noticed that every week, when I set asynchronous work, the students would use this as a starting base and come to the next lesson with other relevant elements they had found on their own. We then shared these in the lesson. However, this did not happen when ordinary homework was set.

I started enjoying adding materials to the A-Level French Team as I could see students were exploring them with my guidance and, in turn, they grew in independence in their own learning.

Using the HyperDoc method ensures independent work is rewarded and incorporated into the scheme of the lessons so that students have a direct impact on their own lessons. It makes teaching a much more organic and holistic process. This is such a positive step for their learning and engagement in lessons.

For this particular project, I decided to focus on preparation for a topic we start in Year 2 of A-level French. I asked a French native speaker to visit our lesson virtually and talk in French about the Occupation of France during World War II and how it affected her family. I had considered this before but had not had the opportunity to do this. Inviting a speaker and getting someone to College is much more complicated than reaching them via Teams! Being involved with the Curriculum Influencers project gave me the spur to do it. I am happy to share the HyperDoc/asynchronous route I took with colleagues to further develop how I might work with it in the future.

I used the elements of the HyperDoc document to scaffold the learning in synchronous and asynchronous work. The basic elements of the HyperDoc are the following:

Lesson Title

To use this HyperDoc template, make a copy, then follow the lesson design notes to add content, links, and instructions. *A completed lesson template is meant for students to use.* HyperDoc templates are easy to revise and customize to the structure of the lesson you are creating, just follow the instructions below. Share the HyperDoc lesson through Google Classroom or with a link, and guide your students through the learning experience. Have fun!

	Engage To **engage** students at the beginning of a lesson, insert video, image, quote, or another inspirational hook in this box.
	Explore Curate a collection of resources (articles, videos, infographics, text excerpts, etc.) for students to **explore** a topic.
	Explain Use this section of the HyperDoc to **explain** the lesson objective through direct instruction using your favourite web tool, or gather students together to teach the content.
	Apply Create an assignment for students to **apply** what they learn by using web tools to create, collaborate, and/or connect beyond the classroom.
	Share Collect student work to provide feedback, and/or include a section for students to **share** work with an authentic audience.
	Reflect Include an opportunity for face-to-face or digital **reflection** to guide students along their learning progression and set new goals.

The HyperDocs Basic Template (HyperDocs, 2020, cited in LaBonte, 2020)

You can always add activities to extend learning and differentiate according to your students' abilities and interests.

Theme: The Occupation in France during the Second World War

Inspirational hook:

Paul Eluard's poem: *'Liberté - J'écris ton nom'* cited in Poetica (2022).

This is a remarkably simple poem to read and expresses the importance of freedom for a country that has been occupied by a foreign power.

Explore:

Students were not given any specific information on the Second World War, as they were expected to listen to Marie, the visiting speaker, and make notes on her family's story.

They met Marie online, who re-told in French her family's story of life under the Occupation. This was recorded so that students could re-listen to it, just as they can do with the listening component in the A-level exam situation in MFL.

There was an online presentation alongside Marie's re-telling, so that the visuals matched the oral and a chronological timeline which was given to the students after they have worked out as much of the main events of the Occupation from Marie's slot.

Explain:

Students went through the timeline and filled in the gaps – with the relevant historic events – to provide a solid framework for the study of the topic.

Apply:

Given their knowledge so far, the students found out about key characters in the Occupation:

Général de Gaulle

Maréchal Pétain

Jean Moulin

These 3 characters led into finding out more about:

The Resistance

The Vichy Regime

The Allies' battle against the Nazis

Other elements to discover in asynchronous work in September 2021

Students were asked to make their own discoveries on the topic areas below with relevant guidance from me, and then they would be asked to feed back in lessons in *Share* and *Reflect*.

Extended knowledge could mean they might decide to take an element of this work for their **INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT** - speaking test.

Independent work

What are the following elements in The French Occupation?

Write 100 words in French on the following topics:

L'Exode

Le Marché Noir

Les STOs

Le Rationnement

Les Juifs en France/ Le Vélodrome d'Hiver

Further reading resources for students:

Novels set in the Occupation period:

Un Sac de Billes - J. Joffo

Le Silence de la Mer - Vercors

Films on the Occupation

Belle et Sebastien 2013

Monsieur Batignolle 2002

Au-revoir les enfants 1987

Lucien Lacombe 1974

Un Sac de Billes 2017

This article demonstrates how lockdown teaching gave the impetus for another method of teaching, namely the use of the HyperDoc. This has proved to be exciting and useful to both, a tutor and students, and as a method which can be revised for in-person and online learning.

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JO-ANNE CHEVALIER
Course Leader
Land-Based Studies

Working in a digital world

We are living in the digital age and as such teaching has no choice but to evolve along with every other aspect of society. This presents many challenges, especially to teachers who have been "in the game" a while! We have all spent hours creating lesson resources, to help our learners, with the assurance that "it will be easier next year". This is true to a certain degree, however we all know that next year, just like tomorrow, never really comes.

In the last two years there has been a seismic shift due to circumstances outside of our control and an acute need to work from home. We have to remember that this has affected people in many different ways and no two people are exactly the same. There is a huge mixing pot of "outside of work" digital experience/use, as well as differences in employees' "at home" tech standards/accessibility and home responsibilities such as children. Not everyone has a state-of-the-art laptop with superfast fibre optic broadband; not everyone is child-free; and not everyone spends much of their free time on social media.

Many of the skills you need to work digitally are transferable, so an avid social media user can get their heads around the platforms we use in work much more easily.

The College has a digital influencers group that includes a mentoring programme where we act as mentors to staff members, who are finding the shift to online working challenging in some way. I approached mentoring with all of the above in mind.

I have three mentees all with different levels of experience and requirements who I have met with a number of times so far. The average score of their current knowledge and confidence was 2/10!

Mentee 1 – An experienced teacher and course leader who would like support to set up their course files/teams and run the course team independently rather than relying on others to help or do it for them.

Mentee 2 – A new teaching staff member who is starting from scratch and has not needed to use these digital platforms much in the past. They would like to be able to use technology more interactively in the classroom to gain formative feedback on learner progress.

Mentee 3 – An experienced teacher who has been "in the game" a long time, has a lot of experience, but one of those who does not access social media outside of work, causing a gap in their transferable skills and understanding.

We have met for reviews and the average skill/confidence level is now 6-8/10 which is a massive improvement. There have been other impacts witnessed during these reviews too:

- Learners are more engaged and less confused with their learning tools.
- We have tangible evidence of student progress and learning that is always accessible.
- The stress levels on the mentees are lowered, naturally impacting on learners having a more positive experience and the staff being more productive.
- Staff can work in a smarter way resulting in being more efficient.
- Creates a more inclusive and consistent learning environment in a world where staff and learners may have to work from home at short notice.

A further impact that cannot be overlooked is the increased confidence a programme like this can give the Mentor themselves. There is nothing more rewarding to me than helping others, and the boost in self confidence that it can give is definitely worth it!

Mentoring experience - screenshots of PowerPoint slides shared by Jo-Anne at her team meeting

JOLANTA PETERS (FHEA)
Research and Library Services Manager
Learning Resources Service

How the pandemic has shaped the library service

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on academic library services globally. Many libraries were forced to close and move their services online to support their academic communities. Librarians were prompted to work from home and learn a range of new technologies and video conferencing applications to continue supporting teaching, learning and research remotely or through a hybrid approach.

The College library service was no exception and joined the effort to respond accordingly to a growing demand for online library resources and services. There was a growth in digital tools' application, the launch of virtual reference services, and the need to re-frame the delivery of information literacy. This article therefore aims to reflect on some of these new digital practices adopted by the College libraries during the pandemic years, with particular focus on its unique information literacy programme and its synchronous and asynchronous delivery.

Re-framed library induction and information literacy sessions

During the Covid pandemic, a range of library literature emerged advocating the use of digital tools to support online and hybrid learning. Some refer to the use of gamification, augmented reality and 'Escape Room' concepts in library orientation (Chesworth, 2019; Kannegiser, 2021; Radford, Costello and Montague, 2021). Others report a notable surge in the use of virtual reference services (Hervieux, 2021), or start evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of synchronous and asynchronous library instruction (Tomaszewski, 2021). Additionally, the 'Embedded Librarian' concept re-emerges to engage with learners online via their platforms (Strasz, 2021). When evaluating the library services during the pandemic years, it is evident that a lot of these innovations, identified in literature, resonate with the services offered at the College. Indeed, it saw the launch of the Librarian Live Chat service and the Digital Book Club; a surge in the use of QR codes as directional tools; a move to online library orientation and transformation of instructional sessions.

Prior to the pandemic, the Learning Resources Service ran its library induction and information literacy sessions face-to-face in the LRC. The service prides itself in the delivery of a unique information literacy programme – the HeadStart (HE Academic Development) programme. It consists of 5-6 sessions that support HE students' academic development and prepares them to become independent and effective learners:

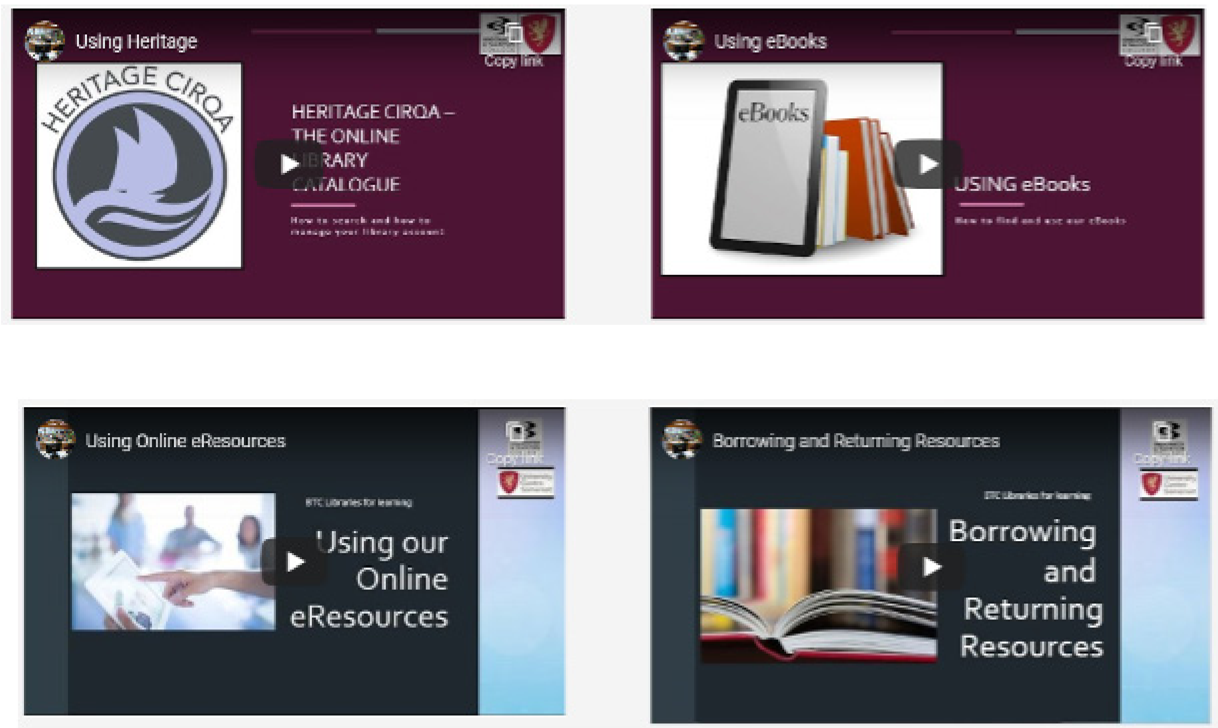
- Bridgwater and Taunton College Library resources
- Partner University portal and library resources (where applicable)
- Harvard referencing
- Plagiarism
- Evaluation of information
- Academic writing

These sessions equip students with techniques to effectively search for, locate and evaluate information; avoid plagiarism and collusion, and learn to write academically. They are also contextualised for each programme to help students apply their skills in practice.

However, at the start of the pandemic in March 2020, there was a seismic shift in the delivery of the library induction and the HeadStart programme. The historical face-to-face model moved online to synchronous (sessions delivered live online) and asynchronous (pre-recorded tutorials uploaded to relevant platforms) methods. Such change, most importantly, helped mitigate the spread of the virus and removed several logistical issues, including the management of student numbers, room bookings and timetabling in the LRCs.

To support online delivery, the College immediately organised an extensive digital skills programme for its staff. Librarians started exploiting a number of digital tools to enhance their synchronous and asynchronous delivery of library instruction online. These included the use of "Design Ideas" in PowerPoint 365 and the use of Microsoft (MS) Sway to enhance the visual appeal of the slides; embedding short polls, videos, and quizzes via Microsoft Forms; the application of digital whiteboards for brainstorming ideas, zooming-in and pointing tools to highlight key messages and ideas.

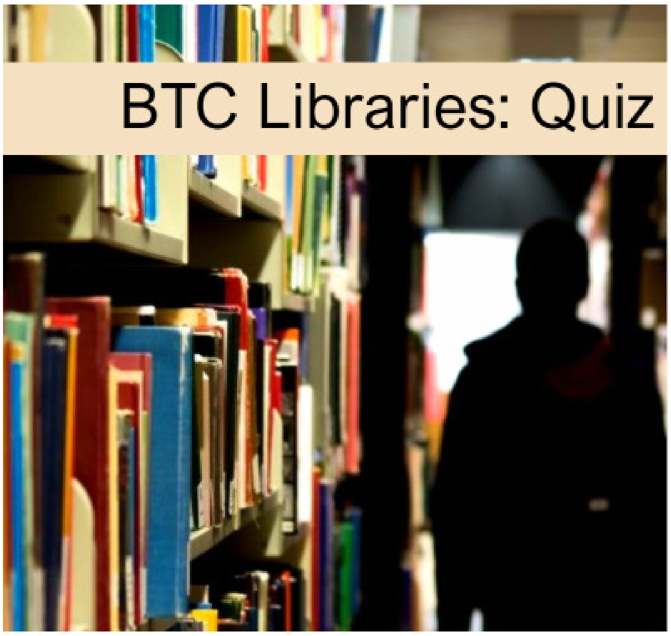
The library induction was re-designed into an asynchronous method and uploaded to the library pages on Blackboard. Additionally, several online tutorials were created: searching the library catalogue; borrowing and returning resources; using e-books and other online resources. The videos included a voice-over with embedded accessibility features: ability to adjust fonts, contrasts, use digital highlighters and colour schemes. At the end of each video students were able to test themselves by completing a quiz and collecting points. They were able to view their results with the scores and evaluate their learning progress.



College library tutorials designed during the pandemic

Additionally, an interactive library induction quiz was created in the form of an 'Escape Room' concept. It is a more immersive experience, with gamification elements, where students work through solving clues and unlocking items as they progress through the virtual library induction. Escape Rooms involve storyboarding skills for librarians and become a part of the creative process.

Chesworth (2019, p. 2), for example, thinks that for students, escape rooms as part of the library induction offer 'problem-solving and critical thinking through engagement with puzzles'. Although she acknowledges that creating such interactive materials are time-consuming for librarians, they offer huge potential for re-inventing a traditional library induction.



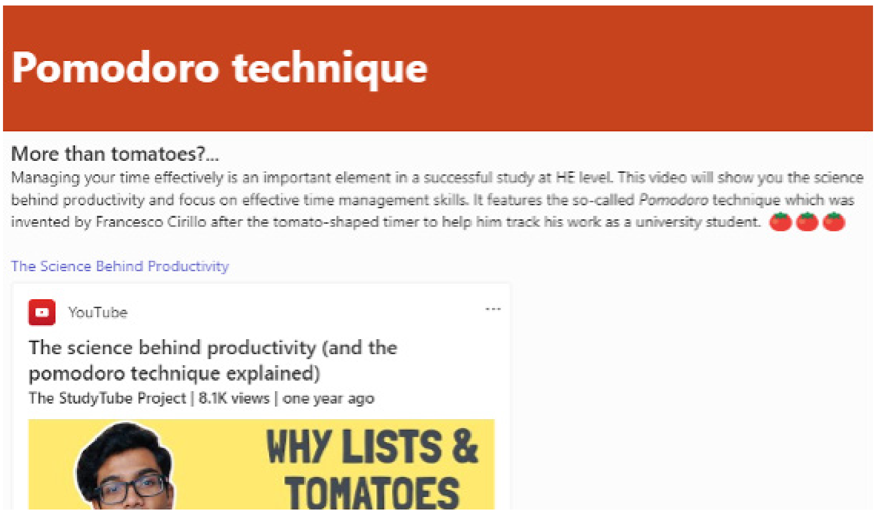
Escape Room concept: the cover of the BTC Libraries quiz

Synchronous and asynchronous library instruction

In his case study Tomaszewski (2021) explores a number of advantages and disadvantages of the so-called asynchronous 'one-shot' library instruction. From the point of view of a user, he evaluates technological requirements, accessibility, usability, and the interactivity of such tutorials. From the point of view of a creator, in this case a subject librarian, Tomaszewski (2021) explores the benefits and the drawbacks of asynchronous delivery in terms of technology needs, costs, logistics, content planning and delivery, and time.

Although creating engaging and inspirational asynchronous videos can be time-consuming, there are many benefits that can outweigh some of the disadvantages. Students can access them in their own time and at their own pace 24/7; they can pause and repeat watching the content. This means that they are in control of their own learning progress. Potentially one of the key disadvantages to asynchronous instruction is the lack of real-time interactivity and ability to engage in group or collaborative work. However, this method still enables librarians to embed interactive tools asynchronously: voice-overs, quizzes, videos and links. Accessibility features, such as closed captioning and subtitles, can support students with disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language. Tomaszewski (2021, p.2) refers to the creation of asynchronous library tutorials as a "form of art" as they need to inspire students to engage in active learning, critical thinking and problem-based learning.

Another advantage of asynchronous delivery is that College librarians were able to customise and contextualise these tutorials for a specific programme without a need to re-create them anew, or 're-invent the wheel'. Tutorials were either uploaded directly to relevant platforms or shared with students via the curriculum staff. Although real-time questioning is not possible with such tutorials,



A screenshot of librarian engagement in an MS Teams channel

BTC/UCS librarians have enabled a follow-on 'Question and Answer' synchronous session. This meant that after having watched an asynchronous tutorial, students were able to arrange a short synchronous session with their subject librarian later via MS Teams, Blackboard or Google Classroom. During the synchronous session they were able to ask questions on the aspects they may have found more difficult to conceptualise when working through the asynchronous tutorial in their own time. It could be argued that this approach also provides students with additional reflection time to pose more focused questions to librarians to support their information literacy development.

Alternatively, students were able to post questions directly via the "Embedded Librarian" channel within their curriculum online platform to receive responses this way. Han and Lu (2020) advocate active student participation and a student-centred approach in the so-called one-shot library instruction. They also affirm that the richness and diversity of each student's experience can add value to the library instruction. The librarian's role in such situations is to 'take the students' existing experience of locating and utilizing information as the growth point of new knowledge, leading students to "grow" new ideas from their prior experience' (Han and Lu, 2020, p. 523).

Interactivity techniques in the synchronous online session

One of the key advantages of synchronous online library session delivery is the real-time interaction between subject librarians and students. Employing effective questioning techniques during such library sessions can help students retain their focus on the subject delivered, create active engagement and a group dynamic.

In 2016 Bradbury carried out a literature review of student concentration levels during presentations. He cites several studies (Hartley and Davies, 1978; Wankat, 2002; Svinicki and McKeachie, 2013) which claim that students' attention span deteriorates 10-15 minutes into the presentation. Bradbury, however, is not convinced by these claims and has identified methodological flaws and subjectivity in some of these studies. He goes on to conclude that 'even the most interesting material can be presented in a dull and dry fashion, and it is the job of the instructor to enhance their teaching skills to provide not only rich content but also a satisfying lecture experience for the students' (Bradbury, 2016, p.509). The same could be said about synchronous library session delivery. For example, embedding interactivity and creating a personal feel at the start of the session can put students at ease. Hanz and Lange (2013, p. 533) re-affirm that the first five minutes are deemed the most important in setting the tone of the delivery and breaking the ice. According to them, this is the crucial time to create a connection with the students, capture their interest and engage them in the topic.

As part of the library session, the College librarians have therefore adopted some of the "techniques of engagement": asking students to keep their video on where possible and engage in the activities via the chat line. Short "yes or no" answers were encouraged to gauge students' prior knowledge on the topic, or to assess their learning and retention of the information throughout the session. Just as in a face-to-face session, body language and eye contact are important. Looking directly into your camera can help engage learners in active participation. When using questioning techniques in an online environment, it is equally important to be patient when waiting for replies. For example, there could be an unexpected time lag or a bandwidth issue; or students simply need more time to reflect and respond in an online environment.

Short polls, quizzes, interaction via a chat line, "raise a hand" facility and other features enabled by the platform, proved to be useful add-ons in creating an engaging library session. The use of virtual whiteboards, with the added features of zooming-in and pointing, embedding relevant videos and links, provided enhanced library instruction. The inclusion of digital break-out rooms is another possible tool to help add interactivity in synchronous library sessions and could be explored further to support collaborative or group work.

In summary, it is evident that the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the delivery of library instructional sessions to support online or hybrid learning. It also demonstrated how rapidly the library service responded to new ways of working by adopting a plethora of digital tools and re-inventing library instruction. At the time of writing this article in 2022, the Learning Resources Service is working on the 'Embedded Librarian' pilot study. This project involves evaluating a range of innovative LRC-driven interventions to engage students in the library service, at the campus and online, and support their literacy and academic development. The outcomes from this study will be disseminated at the College's annual Research and Scholarship conference and in the next issue of this publication.

With the easing of the pandemic, it is also evident that academic librarians will continuously evolve in their digital upskilling efforts, adopt innovative information literacy pedagogies, and transform their library instructional sessions. It is therefore not surprising that they are more than ready to serve their communities to the best of their abilities, whether this be face-to-face, online or through a hybrid approach.

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MAX DALDA MÜLLER
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Counselling and Psychotherapy

'You are on mute', or what I learnt during the pandemic

Figure 1: E+R+O Diagram, adapted from May (1963) and Canfield (2015)

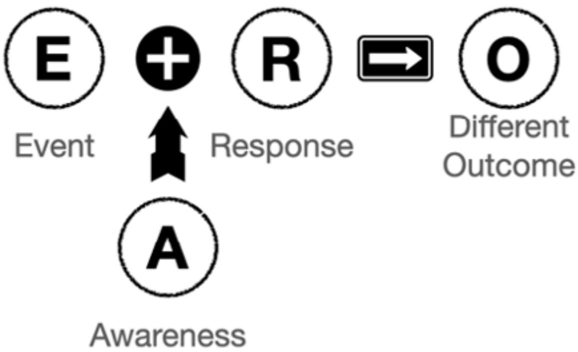

Figure 2: E+R+O Diagram, adapted from May (1963) and Canfield (2015)

This article is a personal and theoretical reflection on the process of becoming a reflexive practitioner.

In February 2022, the UK Government ended all legal restrictions brought in during the COVID-19 pandemic. After the trials and tribulations of the past two years, we are slowly charting our way into the 'new normal'. This seems, to me, a good time to pause and reflect on what we have learnt from the experience.

The paradigm of the *reflective practitioner* has been at the core of both my counselling and teacher training. Coffield and Williamson (2011, p.27) describe how 'knowledge, learning and understanding emerge as part of a process of discussion, reflection, writing and sharing of ideas and good practice'. At the heart of good practice, in all the helping professions, is the 'ability to learn from, reflect on and develop our work' (Hawkins and McMahon, 2020, p.17). Bager-Charleson (2010, p.14) describes the process of reflective practice as one where we examine our experience, assess what is reflected back at us, and construct meaning out of it.

We have, over the years, established processes and protocols for reflection in our practice, both as counsellors and as educators. In counselling this takes place mainly in clinical supervision: a space for support, learning and quality control (Proctor 1988). In teaching, we are all familiar with observations, self-assessment monitoring (SAM) reports, staff development days, and appraisals.

One of the interesting things about the pandemic was that we were all thrown into the deep end of a totally new experience. We had to learn to counsel and teach in unfamiliar environments and with new tools. Using Broadwell's (cited in Keeley, 2021) Stages of Competence Model, we went from a place of unconscious competence straight to conscious incompetence. We had to spend a significant amount of time in the region between conscious incompetence and conscious competence. I like to think that we are all accomplished enough in a blended or hybrid model of teaching and counselling in 2022. We looked after our students and clients. In the words of Donald Winnicott

(1955, cited in Karpf 2013), we became good enough (m)others.

I would like you to cast your mind back to those heady days of learning how to teach remotely, improvising as we went along. I, for one, often felt that I was flying by the seat of my pants, if you pardon the expression. I had hardly any previous experience and I felt like I was winging it on a daily basis. However, I was not improvising but drawing on previous experiences and learning as I went along. I mostly remained in what Hawkins and Shohet (2006) call *my learning edge*, not too comfortable but also not in full panic. In this state of mind and body, I was able to reflect *in the job*, rather than *on the job*, a concept first developed by Donald Schön in 1983.

I am currently doing an MA in Counselling and Psychotherapy at Bath Spa University. My current assignment is a reflection on practice. In it, I am exploring how to develop *reflexive practice*. The concept follows on the work of David A. Kolb, Jack Mezirow and the aforementioned Donald Schön, and has been further developed by modern theorists such as Kim Etherington.

Etherington (2017) explains reflexivity as an ability to notice how we respond to people, our environment and events; and to use that knowledge to inform our behaviour. She makes the point that we need to be aware of how we respond to the world and to use our self-awareness to make choices, to the best of our ability. She also raises the importance of having social and cultural sensitivity and a willingness to look at our own biases when we interpret the world.

It means reflecting *in the moment*, feeling and thinking on our feet; and to allow our emotions, senses and cognitions to inform our actions. As a means to practice reflection-in-the-moment, I would like to offer you some concepts from psychotherapy which you may find useful in teaching and in your personal life.

We often use the phrase "in hindsight…" but, as we all well know, hindsight is a wonderful thing which we do not always have at the time. Lapworth and Sills (2011, pp.127-128) offer a useful three stage model to help us change:

1. **Hindsight:** this means becoming aware of our thoughts, feelings, responses and behaviour. This is accomplished through reflection and interpersonal (from others) and intrapsychic (internal) feedback.

2. **Midsight:** through reflection and integration of feedback, we become aware of our responses *in the moment*. We are able to listen to our intrapsychic process and this allows us to make informed choices.

3. **Foresight:** eventually, through a process of reflection and evaluation, we become able to know how we are likely to respond to certain situations.

Another useful reflexive tool is **E+R=O**. This was an idea first explained by Rollo May when he stated that:

> *Freedom is the individual's capacity to (..) pause between stimulus and response and thus to throw his weight, however slight it may be, on the side of one particular response among several possible ones* (May, 1963, pp.102-103).

This was later taken up by Jack Canfield (2015, p.10), an American author and motivational speaker, who came up with the equation E+R=O. I will attempt to outline this concept.

Without reflection, we go through life reacting to stimuli. For example, think of any event (E in figure 1) which causes an emotional response, such as fear or anger. We tend to react to these things from our brain's limbic system which scans the environment for dangers, physical or psychological. Our brain learns from experience, so our limbic system sees something in the here and now, runs it against our memory banks and, if any results are found, it activates our *fight* or *flight* mechanism (Eagleman, 2015). The brain *reacts* (R). This happens very quickly so we cannot really control our emotional responses to events. If we feel something, we feel something.

The interesting thing is that our reactions in the *here and now* are not always related to what is actually happening in front of us. For example, a student not listening could activate, for me, a memory of not being listened to as a child. I then go through a range of emotions such as abandonment, shame, loss. In that situation, I feel vulnerable. My limbic system reacts, adrenaline is released, anxiety levels increase, negative automatic thoughts kick in, negative behaviour patterns appear and, before I know it, I am in full meltdown. This is the outcome (O). All because I perceived that someone is not listening to me.

At this point, we introduce the next part of this model. I have, over time and through reflection, developed an *awareness* (A) of my automatic response to certain situations (see Figure 2). Instead of avoiding my emotions, I listen to them and to the reality of the situation. I notice that I am reacting to a memory rather than to what is in front of me. For all I know, the student is not listening because they are trying to remember if they paid for their car park. By checking in with myself, I am able to regain control of my emotions, thoughts and actions. I can make informed and responsible choices in the *here and now*. This is another example of *reflection in action* (Schön, 1983).

The question is: how do we develop self-awareness? Bager-Charleson (2020, p.26) suggests five key elements for the personal development of therapists: clinical supervision, personal therapy, creativity (including reflective writing), continuous professional development and research.

Yalom (2008, pp.112-114) recommends using the Johari Window as a way of developing self-awareness. The idea is that by disclosing things about ourselves which are hidden, and by receiving feedback from others on aspects that we are blind to, we will decrease our unknown area and become more aware of ourselves, holistically.

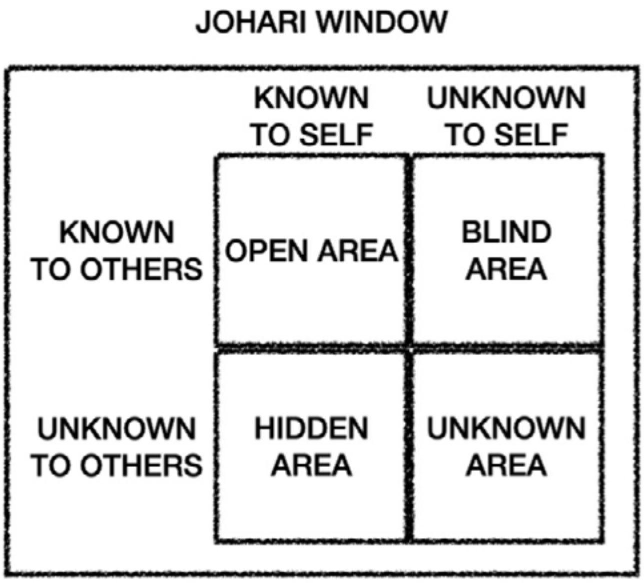

Figure 3: Johari Window adapted from Luft and Ingram (1955, cited in Sanders 2011, p. 60)

I am very keen to continue developing my self-awareness in order to become more reflexive in my practice. I hope the suggestions that I made in this article have been of some help to others. I would very much appreciate engaging in collaborative work with other professionals at BTC, especially in the area of qualitative research.

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NEIL DAVIES
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Achieving Microsoft Innovative Educator (MIE) Expert status

This article showcases the questions and answers as part of my application to gain MIE Expert status with Microsoft. It outlines how I used digital platforms and educational technologies to deliver Teacher Training remotely.

Describe how you leverage Microsoft tools to increase accessibility for all learners in your classroom (what tools do you use and how do they support different learning needs?)

I was able to demonstrate how trainee teachers can use the Immersive Reader tool in their own lessons with their leaners. Framing it around what they can do with their learners also provided a safer environment for trainees to express how beneficial the different features are for their own learning and individual needs without judgement. We were able to understand word meanings and improve vocabulary using the dual coding methods, make it easier to focus on reading (bigger font and line focus mode) and improve the enunciation of longer words (breaking words into syllables), where applicable. I promoted the Read Aloud feature as a useful proof-reading tool for trainees before the submission of essays and course work. Not only did this improve grades, but also allowed trainees to check the quality and inclusivity of their own learning resources for lessons, and ultimately improve their own and their learners' writing capacity.

Using the Dictate feature was demonstrated in a study skill session and provided an excellent tool to help writer's block. This is a good study skill that we adopt in small groups to emphasise how it works and how much easier it might be to generate ideas and thoughts before starting the formal writing process. Again, the dual benefit on trainee teachers' coursework and skills they can promote with their own learners was extremely empowering. I had two Spanish speaking students this year and knowing that writing in their native tongue might be easier using the Immersive Reader language feature helped with translation, but also reinforced the need for proof-reading their own coursework prior to submission. This provided practice for their own English reading and writing development. Although I did not use it that regularly, the option to present using live captions and subtitles added another layer of inclusivity and allowed all learner needs to be met -

something that is strongly promoted to trainees throughout the course.

Tell us about a series of lessons, a unit, or a project you did with learners that incorporates Microsoft technology for improved learning outcomes. What 21CLD (21st Century Learning Design) skills were included in the learning and explain in detail how those skills were developed?

Due to the global pandemic and lockdown measures within education, the Initial Teacher Education programmes transitioned to online delivery using Microsoft (MS) Teams for 2020/21. Bespoke MS Teams pages allowed synchronous and asynchronous lessons to occur through weekly meetings (skilled communications); class materials could be accessed (knowledge construction), and learning could take place independently or in collaboration. Assignments could also be submitted and marked online providing feedback (Assessment) for progress and achievement. Third party apps, such as Nearpod, Quizizz and Quizlet, developed ICT literacy and checked learning was taking place (knowledge construction) during lessons. These platforms meant trainee teachers could access, interpret and analyse Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) related topics and evaluate these techniques to improve their own TLA practice.

Weekly posts provided professional communication accessible at the learner's convenience (24/7 Learning). The dialogue between staff and trainee teachers allowed for course and TLA-related problems to be discussed and solved in an open and self-regulated manner. Breakout Rooms were used regularly to provide a safe and collaborative environment to share ideas and problem-solve a number of challenges they faced in their own practice. The use of whiteboards and the collaboration space in OneNote provided further opportunities for this type of learning to take place synchronously or asynchronously. Trainees delivered assessment seminars to practise using "chat bar", "hands up", "mute", "cameras on/off" and sharing links and resources. Providing additional channels allowed collaboration on the same document and private channels between tutor and student kept communication private and confidential.

Describe what the artifact (the result of student learning) is, how it demonstrated the desired learning objectives, and how Microsoft tools were a critical part of the learning.

The artifact is a series of screen shots from a breakout room (collaborative task) created by Level 4 trainee teachers when being introduced to the Lotus Diagram approach (creative writing technique). The topic being explored was "what makes for an effective lesson". Each breakout room had a different feature to explore, and they needed to identify 8 ways of implementing the central theme. The learning aim for the session was "Explore different techniques to embed minimum core activities (English, maths and ICT) in education and training" and the Lotus Diagram approach (English) was the specific technique being demonstrated and explored. Breakout rooms and online whiteboards (ICT) were the chosen mediums to construct knowledge and express their understanding of effective teaching and learning. MS Teams provided continuity of delivery whilst in lockdown and naturally merged the embedding of minimum core concepts. Features of effective TLA were discussed within the breakout room, and on return to the main meeting each group would feedback using a resource (whiteboard diagram) and verbal explanations. These tools were essential in creating a student-centred, collaborative and problem-solving learning environment. It also allowed trainees to practise and develop their ICT skills.

Share two examples of how you have supported both your own learning and the learning and growth of your colleagues. Describe the activities that you completed and led and how it resulted in better teaching and learning.

I ran a one-hour session "MS Teams for Beginners" during a cross-college staff development day. More than 25 delegates attended the remote CPD session where I was able to show lecturers, curriculum managers and support staff how to create an MS Teams page, add members, manage channels, create and upload class materials, use the assignments tab and demonstrate the use of breakout rooms. Knowledge gained (listening, seeing, watching back the video, using the resources created) will allow staff to engage with online platforms more confidently and develop and promote a 21st century skill set for themselves and with their students or staff. My extensive use of MS Teams and the CPD training I have delivered and experienced has allowed me to share best practice with my students and colleagues. After attending a CPD session on using breakout rooms I was able to introduce this into my own teaching. The integrated version proved more successful than creating separate channels and meetings for collaboration and group discussion. I was able to train my staff team (Business lecturers and Teacher Training staff) in using both versions of breakout rooms to aid student-centred learning. Due to the success of this training, I was then asked to do the same with Trainee Assessors in the wider department. By showing staff the integrated feature in an MS Teams meeting I was able to provide confidence for them to try this in their own teaching and getting them to create a whiteboard (pictures and text) introduced a secondary skill (21st century) set. The video recordings and downloadable documents were also shared as best practice amongst other curriculum teams within the College.

PAUL SMITH

Associate Lecturer
Graphic Media & Communication

Making a case for print marketing in a digital world

"Print is dead. It's all online these days!"

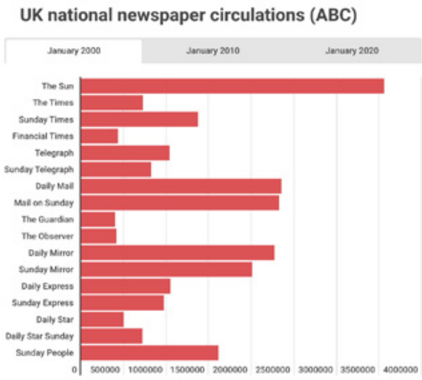


Figure 1: UK national newspaper sales in Jan 2000

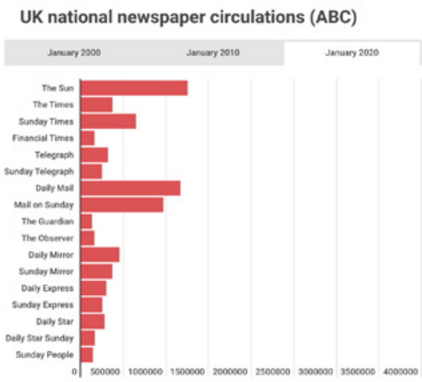


Figure 2: UK national newspaper sales in Jan 2020

Figure 3: Specsavers direct mail campaign
(Market Reach, no date)

As someone who owns a magazine publishing business, I am often in the position of defending print's value and relevance in a fast-moving digital world. There is no doubt that in the last 20 years there has been a dramatic shift in how we consume and access information. A smart phone, tablet or desktop gives us all the information we need with just a few clicks.

Print comes in various forms: newspapers, books, magazines, leaflets and signage. The newspaper industry has been significantly affected by the digital revolution. UK national newspaper sales have slumped by two-thirds in 20 years as the digital revolution grew (see Figures 1 and 2). With information freely and instantly available online, paying for 'news on paper' simply does not seem relevant anymore. Where does this leave newspapers? It is a case of adapt and survive to meet changing demands. A print and digital hybrid is a model that many are adopting, working together in union.

The challenge for large corporations is how they appeal to readers who have had information for free, and then ask them to pay and support independent journalism. Monthly subscriptions for broadsheets such as The Guardian or The Telegraph have a paywall to allow you to access articles and information. Even our local press has had to adopt a model with websites generating revenue from pop up adverts, surveys, and third-party news.

We are all familiar with intrusive adverts online when we watch a video on YouTube or load an app on our smartphone. Businesses must make money, so there must be a trade off if you are accessing content for free.

With all this in mind, does print still have a place in a digital world? Our students at College live and breathe all things digital, in a world where access to information is on demand. As printed newspapers continue their downward spiral where does this leave the rest of the print industry?

6 reasons why print still works

#1 Print is more tangible

As a physical medium print offers something ‘real’ we can hold. You might be surprised to hear that during the Covid-19 lockdowns, when we were stuck at home with access to the Internet, UK book sales in 2021 were at their highest in a decade at 212 million (Flood, 2022).

When we teach children to read, we give them a physical book to hold. They use touch to turn the pages, perhaps with the interactive elements in the book and engage with the images and text in a way that a digital device struggles to do.

Magazines also saw a rise in sales for particular genres, focused on the home, garden and food: *Garden Answers* growing by 35%; *BBC Gardeners’ World* by 31%; *Landscape* by 28%. Children’s titles also saw an increase: Lego (22%), Beano (9%), Peppa Pig (10%) and PJ Masks (24%) (Tobitt, 2021).

Vinyl record sales in 2021 were the highest in 30 years with more than 5 million sold (Richards, 2021). People want the experience of something real, to appreciate the craft and artistry that goes beyond the music itself.

#2 Print is less saturated

Printed media often carries a greater sense of legitimacy due to the over saturation of online display advertising, which can be overwhelming for the audience. ‘In our digitally optimised world, customer targeting has never been easier’ (Market Reach, 2018), with up to 10,000 marketing messages a day (American Marketing Association, 2018, cited in Market Reach, 2018) ‘it's also never been harder to cut through all the … noise...’ (Market Reach, 2018). Royal Mail's neuroscience study shows mail can make a difference. Research shows mail is remembered 35% more than social media and 49% more than email (American Marketing Association, 2018, cited in Market Reach, 2018).

#3 Print is more trusted

Social media has made the world more transparent, giving the consumer more 'power' and 'control' over the information they receive, and how they are choosing to use it. One downside is in the accuracy of this information, and those sharing it. Often fake news can be circulated without being fact-checked first.

#4 Print has a higher retention

Social media is a powerful tool, but it is a bit like sticking a post-it note onto the windscreen of a car on a windy day. Print has longevity, while internet ads and emails are more disposable.

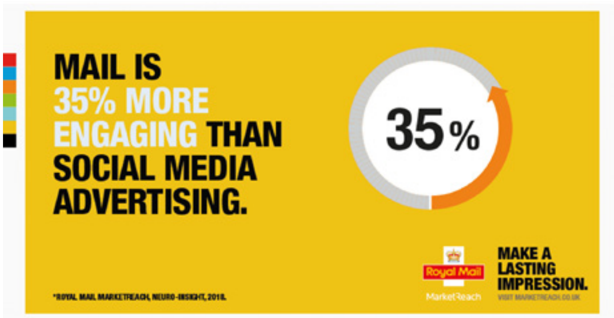
Printed publications seem to be thriving in areas where quirk, character and community are valued over immediacy. Community magazines help to promote local businesses, news and harbour a sense of belonging. People like to collect them.

#5 Print has a higher engagement

As more communication moves online it can lead to ‘digital fatigue’. Messages can lose their impact and be diluted if we see too many at the same time. With more and more businesses moving to advertising solely on the internet, print media now has an easier job in finding its voice, cutting through the noise and being more memorable.

Consumers are more engaged when reading printed material than they are on the web, where web pages are skimmed in as little as 10 seconds. In short, people are more likely to fully absorb what you are saying.

> *Studies have suggested that print advertising is the most cost-effective form of marketing with a higher return on investment than most digital media. In fact, 76% of small businesses state that their ideal marketing mix is a combination of print and digital communications* (Pitney Bowes, 2011).



Market Reach cited in Data and Marketing Association (2022)

Another successful area of print that continues to perform well is in direct mail. We are all familiar with returning home to find several different printed items put through our letterbox. As more companies choose to move online there is more chance your printed item will now arrive on its own and stand out from your competitors and be read in isolation.

A perfect example of this in action is a successful direct mail campaign for Specsavers, which was fulfilled by Royal Mail:

> ***Background***
>
> *73% of Specsavers customers diagnosed with moderate to severe hearing loss will not go on to purchase a hearing aid at the time of diagnosis. 40% of those who do go on to purchase within the first month of their initial appointment.*

Solution

A mailing sent to these crucial customers in the first month brought the problem of hearing loss to life. On the front was a 'conversation' with key words missing. When the recipient pulled the mailing apart, Specsavers filled in the conversation to deliver their message: "Book a hearing aid appointment'. On the back were answers to questions that they had been too afraid to ask (see Figure 3).

Results

This revealing mailing brought eye-opening results with significant numbers of customers coming into store to tackle their hearing loss (Market Reach, no date).

#6 Print reinforces your brand

Print is a great way to solidify your brand and reach people that digital routes fail to. Maintaining a consistent "look" through advertising in terms of fonts, colours and imagery helps to establish greater recognition. This brings a sense of familiarity which makes potential customers more inclined to purchase from you. Print also helps to build trust because you exist as a physical business.

A few years ago, I drove to a local golf club that host numerous events across the year. As I drove along the drive to their reception, I saw banners, signs and information about upcoming events. This was my first marketing touch point.

By chance I happened to chat with the Marketing Executive at the Club. We discussed printed magazines as a way to market their events. He said they did very little print advertising, and that it was all about the push online. I do not follow their social channels, so had not given them permission for their content to arrive in my social feed. They were not reaching me with their marketing. They were also missing out on other potential customers, particularly those from an older demographic who could make up a large proportion of their customers.

Good marketing is about knowing your customer: where they can be found, their values and needs and desires. Advertising to the right people at the right time in the right place is essential to the success of any marketing campaign. Print still plays an important part in a marketing mix for any business.

Consistent and regular advertising across multiple touch points helps to raise awareness of your business and reinforce your core values, services, and messages. This in turn will result in building trust in your company, retaining customers and reaching new ones.

Think of a brand as a peacock. Those that spread their feathers are embracing the art of attraction, reinforcing their values and messages online, offline and face-to-face.

Has the evolution in digital marketing seen the end of print?

Vinyl record sales in 2021 were also the highest in 30 years with more than 5 million sold (Freepik, no date)

Print comes in many forms, aimed to attract and reinforce messages

When we teach children to read, we give them a physical book to hold (Freepik, no date)

The Peacock. Multiple touchpoints strengthen a brand's message (Freepik, no date)

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College Collaboration Fund - Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert (MIEE) Application Group

Rationale

In March 2020, the country entered a national lockdown that saw the closure of all schools and colleges within the UK. This was a challenge that education had not experienced before, as educators were now attempting to provide all students with an engaging digital learning environment as the only form of education. Figures published by Onyema *et al*. (2020) suggest that COVID-19 has had adverse effects on education, including learning disruptions, decreased access to education and research facilities, job losses, and increased student debts. The findings also show that many educators and students relied on technology to ensure continued learning online during the Coronavirus pandemic. Many educators did not have the necessary skills or understanding of how this could be accomplished and therefore as a college we had a duty to rapidly deploy relevant professional development to our teaching and training staff in all disciplines and curricula.

The teaching development team at Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) had been trialling the use of the Microsoft 365 (M365) environment within vocational areas; however, the need for remote teaching acted as a catalyst to the rollout of M365 for general use within the College's teaching practices. The College was successful in the deployment of emergency training, allowing staff to adapt their methods and materials for teaching in an online environment. It was clear that the need for innovative digital environments would continue within education and that a sustained digital development programme would be required to ensure the progression of digital skills among teaching and training staff at BTC.

Through the increased engagement with Microsoft and their partners during the initial roll out, it became apparent that there were several free educator training programmes available through Microsoft to encourage the development of an individual's digital skills. The Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert (MIEE) status is a globally recognised achievement within the educator community, as well as acting as a Professional Learning Network (PLN) made up of educators and learning developers from all disciplines (schools, FE Colleges, and Higher Education Institutions). Successful achievement of the MIEE status is dependent on the approval of a self-nominated application that requires the satisfaction of several criteria, which can be achieved through the completion of a self-managed CPD plan. One member was successful in their application in July 2020, and the achievement of CPD required to achieve this status assisted in the successful deployment of digital training throughout the pandemic.

Intended Impact

We anticipated that there would be a desire to continue to develop the digital skills of all employees, maintaining the progress that had been made through the period of remote teaching and working. This was reflected in Jisc's *Teaching staff digital experience insights survey 2020/2021* where it is suggested that 'just as they have done for learners, colleges need to be mindful of the needs of teaching staff and provide proactive and accessible support during such a prolonged period of intense change when traditional face-to-face peer support mechanisms were not available' (Jisc, 2021, p.6). To sustain the training need, it was deemed appropriate to utilise our College Collaboration Fund (CCF) project to increase the membership of staff working towards MIEE accreditation in the hope that this would foster a college-wide culture of digital innovation across all departments. Our CCF project actively encouraged applications from both curriculum and business support teams.

Those members would then be able to act as an initial point of contact for various curriculum and support teams to assist in the development of digital competencies to ensure that questions could be answered, as well as gathering a training needs analysis to inform the College's strategic approach to digital transformation and innovation. As members would need to maintain their own development to achieve the MIEE status, engagement with the group would also mean that members had access to a vast array of professional development through training events and materials to ensure their skills were continually progressing.

Project Management

Once we had been notified that our bid was successful, information regarding the group was shared at 'all-staff' events at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year. Based on research carried out by Phillips and Gully (1997) where self-efficacy had a positive impact on motivation and ability to participate in the activities, the group was initially open to self-nomination with the aim that this would eventually lead members to submit MIEE applications to Microsoft when the window opened. Toward the end of the initial advertisement, line managers were also able to refer staff as part of their professional development. This was the first time this group had been created within the College, in line with its digital strategy, and therefore all nominations were carried forward to become members. The group funded as part of the CCF consisted of 28 members.

The aims of the group were agreed through discussions with the Director of Staff & Quality Services, the Head of Quality, Teaching & Digital Innovation, and the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Quality Developers. The aims of the project needed to meet three main requisites: the College's strategic aims, the College Collaboration Fund priorities and ultimately the application requirements for the MIEE status.

The aims of the group were to: -

- *promote a culture of digital innovation*
- *act as a digital skills professional development pathway for all staff*
- *provide opportunities for staff to facilitate professional development and identify training needs*
- *facilitate multi-discipline, cross-college sharing of good practice*
- *promote the use of the wider M365 suite of applications across the College*

Learning

Although one system may be used and promoted by the College (for example, Microsoft Teams as a Virtual Learning Environment), the use of and therefore impact of the system can vary dramatically between departments. This can depend on the suitability of the system to the student body as well as the awareness of staff to new developments. Despite this, we have been able to ascertain from the MIEE PLN that the College has been able to provide an excellent digital learning experience for students compared to other areas of the education sector. In addition, according to those interviewed, tutors agree that, much like is suggested within the work of Martin *et al*. (2019), the most important role of the online instructor in both synchronous and asynchronous delivery, is that of the facilitator and to give instructor 'presence' within the digital environment.

The Teams application was originally designed to foster communication and collaboration between colleagues within private businesses and because of this the features are being continually developed to meet the needs of students and educators. Computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) studies support the idea that knowledge building is a collaborative process achieved through seamless conversation and shared ideas among students in a learning community (Xing *et al*., 2015) and therefore this supports the promotion of learning environments to be built and maintained within Microsoft Teams. We have discovered that as our experience of digital education continues to grow, the systems we are employing are continuing to mature leading to an iterative process of development.

It is important to gain the feedback of the end user – our students – to allow for developments of our use of the systems available to ensure we can continue to provide an innovative and engaging learning environment.

Impact

In January 2021, Microsoft opened a second application window for new MIEE applications. From 28 members of the group, there were six applicants that felt prepared to apply; 100% of these applications were successful, taking the total number of MIEEs at the college to seven. With the training opportunities provided through the group, one member became an MIEE Master Trainer – a status gained after reaching various training goals. Since gaining the status they have gone on to be recognised as third in the national rankings, having received 1,778 attendances at facilitated training.

During January 2021, the UK entered a second national lockdown with schools, colleges, and Higher Education Institutions reverting to remote teaching practices. To assist staff with this transition, the group created and facilitated the 'January Digi-Series'. This included 12 remote professional development sessions for staff to join, covering topics such as: Breakout rooms, Microsoft Forms, and the use of OneDrive. The group also contributed to the Spring term Staff Development Day that consisted of a wide variety of asynchronous learning pathways for staff to complete. This involved 'how-to' videos as well as signposting to courses within the Microsoft Education Centre where staff could further develop their skills.

BTC has also noted a dramatic shift in use of digital systems for communication and collaboration. There were 87 daily users of Teams in November 2019, which increased to 5512 in November 2020 as a result of the project work funded under CCF.

Members of the MIEE Application Group regularly contribute to the College's newly formed Digital Innovation Area Review Group, established to monitor the College's digital transformation. They provide examples of innovative teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) using digital platforms throughout the College to key internal and external stakeholders, including our Senior Management Team and Governors as they prepare for the next strategic planning cycle.

Future aspirations for the group are that it becomes an established route of staff development, providing a status within the College to recognise digital innovation. Members of the group will also provide regular staff development to promote digital skills development of both staff and students. We will also consistently trial and develop teaching practices and products to guide the strategic vision of the College's TLA and digital strategies; to assist the College in gaining Microsoft Showcase 'College' (School) status; and to raise the digital profile of the College among the local community and education networks.

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Notes

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